NATION

CBSE retains COEMPT for answer-sheet scanning

≫ Page: 5 ≪

BUSINESS

Govt agencies, pvt firms get Anthropic's Mythos AI

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Andreeva wins first Grand Slam title at French Open

≫ Page: 8 ≪

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 7 JUNE 2026 | SUNDAY | BENGALURU | 20 DHU'L-HIJJAH 1447 H | Vol 5 | Issue No 146 | Pages: 8

CET RESULTS: B'LURU GIRL TOPS ENGG

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

The Karnataka Examination Authority (KEA) announced the results for Karnataka Common Entrance Test (KCET) 2026 at a press conference on Saturday. Bengaluru student Tanisha Karthik of RV PU College, Jayanagar, scored the highest at 99.4 in engineering.

Srajan BS stood second at 99.1 and Ninaad Vasisht, also from RV PU College, Jayanagar, was third in engineering with 98.8. Vasisht also topped Farm Sciences (Agriculture). Navana Gopi topped Veterinary Sciences an Pharmacy (B.Pharm / Pharma-D).

A total of 2,92,782 candidates are eligible to get admission to various professional courses after clearing KCET. If these, 2,82,603 qualified for engineering, BPharma was second with 2,86,609 candidates, Pharma-D had 2,24,100.

The exams were held from 23 to 24 April for Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Biology papers. No negative marking was applicable. This year, 3.1 to 3.2 lakh candidates gave the exam in 745 centres. *—Salar News*

CJP protests NEET leak, gives Pradhan week to quit

Several detained as 'cockroaches' march to Jantar Mantar

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Students, parents and activists alike gathered under the ambit of Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) and protested against the NEET leak at New Delhi's Jantar Mantar on Saturday.

The CJP, led by founder Abhijeet Dipke, demanded Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's removal. They warned that the agitation would expand across the country if he is not removed in seven days. Earlier in the day, Dipke had urged Pradhan to step down by 5pm, with organisers later announcing the seven-day deadline.

Addressing a press conference, CJP spokespersons Ashutosh Ranka and Saurav Das said the protest had drawn participants from several states and marked the beginning of a broader youth movement centred on education and governance issues.

The CJP was born as an online campaign, likely in reference to the Chief Justice of India (CJI) allegedly likening a section of youth to "cockroaches". The Instagram page garnered over 22 million followers.

Organised by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), students protest, demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over alleged examination-related lapses, at the Jantar Mantar, in New Delhi; Activist Sonam Wangchuk stands with CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke holding the Constitution, on Saturday *—PTI*

- The CJP movement, which began against the CJI allegedly likening a section of youth to cockroaches, has spiralled into a wider protest

The CJP had called for peaceful protests against the NEET leak, the National Testing Agency (NTA) and Pradhan. However, at least six protesters were detained by police, many for burning effigies of Pradhan.

Describing the turnout on Saturday as a significant moment, Ranka said the protest demonstrated that young people were willing to mobilise around issues affecting them.

"The time has come to reset our education system, and we have started that reset today," Ranka said, asserting that the demand for Pradhan's resignation was the immediate focus of the movement. He added that if Pradhan was there, the education system could not be fixed. "This is just the beginning. There are so many problems."

"It was such a huge crowd, and yet it remained a very, very peaceful protest. Maybe one of the most peaceful protests the country has seen in a while," he said. "The Gen Z and the youth of this country have Gandhi and Ambedkar in their blood."

'WE ARE NOT SCARED'

Dipke, who arrived in Delhi from the US, said at the gathering that his parents were scared for his safety. "This is the fear of the par
ents of any youngster who speaks on politics.... How long will we live in fear? Tell them, we are not scared". *—PTI*

Reddy has withdrawn his resignation: Cong

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

Congress General Secretary and Karnataka in-charge Randeep Singh Surjewala on Saturday claimed that Ramalinga Reddy had withdrawn his resignation from the ministerial position after discussions with the party leadership.

Reddy had submitted his resignation on Friday after claiming that Chief Minister DK Shivakumar had promised him the Bengaluru Development portfolio, but instead gave him the Major and Medium Irrigation portfolio.

Surjewala attributed the episode to a misunderstanding and asserted that the veteran leader would continue to serve as a "loyal soldier and Minister" in the Congress government.

Calling Reddy an asset to the Congress, Surjewala said Shivakumar, former chief minister Siddaramaiah, Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) President BK Hariprasad and he himself spoke to Reddy after reports of his resignation emerged. Shivakumar and Reddy had met for hours at a hotel.

"He has already, I think, informed you that he has withdrawn his resignation," Surjewala said.

Surjewala also hit out at the BJP alleging that it was attempting to exploit the controversy. He said the Opposition had "prematurely celebrated" the developments and was now in a "state of shock".

"Let me tell both (BJP State President) BY Vijayendra and (Leader of Opposition in the Assembly) R Ashoka that you will repeatedly get a clean defeat in the court of the people," Surjewala said.

Earlier, Shivakumar had described the matter as a "family" dispute and said he would not accept Reddy's resignation under any circumstances. "Whatever needs to be done, we will sort it out internally". *—PTI*

> **PM Narendra Modi has wished me well. I thank him. I will go and meet him respectfully. He need not play politics, and we need not play politics. For the welfare of the people of the State, let us all come together and do whatever work needs to be done**
>
> —DK Shivakumar, Chief Minister

Mansoor, Khera file nominations for Rajya Sabha

AICC Secretary Mansoor Ali Khan submits his Rajya Sabha nomination papers in the presence of Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, former CM Siddaramaiah, KPCC President BK Hariprasad, AICC GS and MP Syed Naseer Hussain; Congress national spokesperson Pawan Khera submits his bid as well, on Saturday *—SALAR*

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

Karnataka Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Saturday said that nomination papers for three Rajya Sabha and five Legislative Council seats have been filed. The Rajya Sabha candidates include AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress national spokesperson Pawan Khera, and AICC Secretary and youth leader Mansoor Ali Khan.

Speaking to reporters in the City, Shivakumar said, "Today we have filed the nomination papers for all five candidates. Three candidates have been fielded for the Rajya Sabha election and five for the Legislative Council election."

Khera, meanwhile, said, "Happy to be in Bangalore. Very happy to be in this State, in this beautiful City, and we will keep talking."

"For all five Legislative Council seats, including the KPCC President, the opportunity has been given to Congress workers," the Chief Minister said.

BK Hariprasad, Tippannappa Kamaknoor, PV Mohan, Shivanna Mallvalli and Vinay Karthik were declared as candidates for the Legislative Council elections.

The Congress on Wednesday appointed senior party leader Hariprasad as the new President of its Karnataka unit to succeed Shivakumar.

The Election Commission had on 1 June issued a notification for biennial elections to 24 Rajya Sabha seats from ten states. Notifications were issued for the Rajya Sabha bypoll for a seat each in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Odisha. Congress on Thursday declared seven candidates for five states, and fielded Kharge on Friday. *—PTI*

Mansoor Ali Khan to continue father's legacy in RS

AICC Secretary Mansoor Ali Khan vowed to continue his father Rahman Khan's legacy in the Rajya Sabha. In a post on X, he said: "This is a big responsibility, and I don't take it lightly. I'm grateful to the Congress leadership for their trust, and to the countless party workers, colleagues, and citizens who have stood with me. I will work hard to serve Karnataka and the nation."

>>>More on Page 2

Iran war heats up again; Kuwait, Bahrain under attack

CAIRO, 6 JUN

Bahrain's government said on Saturday that Iran fired ballistic missiles and drones towards it and Kuwait. This came hours after the US military said it shot down Iranian ballistic missiles and drones launched toward the Strait of Hormuz and Gulf Arab allies on Friday, while striking some of the Islamic Republic's coastal surveillance radar sites in response, an exchange of fire that further frayed a shaky ceasefire with Tehran.

US Central Command said on social media on Friday night that Iran fired seven ballistic missiles toward Kuwait and Bahrain, with US forces intercepting six of the missiles and a seventh failing to reach its target. The military said there were no reports of harm to US personnel. CENTCOM said it hit the radar sites, including an island in the Strait, "to defend against further attacks."

The ballistic missiles were fired after the US earlier in the day shot down four Iranian drones that were launched toward the Strait of Hormuz.

Kuwait's military said forces were intercepting missiles and drones attacking the country, while Bahrain activated air raid sirens and told residents to move to the nearest safe location and follow official instructions.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard said it targeted the Ali Al Salem airbase, which hosts US forces in Kuwait, and the US Navy's 5th Fleet in the tiny Gulf island nation of Bahrain, according to the state-run IRNA news agency.

Earlier in the week, an Indian was killed and dozens other wounded in a strike that hit Kuwait's airport. *—PTI*

>>> Lebanon on Page 6

Sanctions would 'boomerang' under Modi: Putin

ST PETERSBURG, 6 JUNE

Russian President Vladimir Putin has stated that any attempt to undermine India's sovereignty through threats of sanctions would "boomerang immediately" under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. Speaking at the St Petersburg International Economic Forum, Putin said, "India always acts as a sovereign country, and under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, any potential threats of sanctions would boomerang immediately." He highlighted Russia's long-standing defence relationship with India, including joint research on BrahMos and discussions on the Su-57 aircraft, which Russia now plans to sell independently. *—PTI*

>>>MORE ON PAGES 3, 6

Over 120 students in Wayanad get 'food poisoning'

WAYANAD, 6 JUNE

At least 121 students of Mar Baselios Aided Upper Primary School in Wayanad district were affected by suspected food poisoning, with 73 undergoing treatment in various hospitals, Kerala Agriculture Minister T Siddique said on Saturday. Students reported symptoms including fever, chills and diarrhoea. Food and water samples from the school have been sent for testing, and results are expected within two days. Authorities said there is no cause for alarm. A special ward has been set up at Bathery Taluk Hospital, additional paediatricians have been deployed, and a week-long holiday has been declared for the school as a precaution. A teacher also reported similar symptoms. *—PTI*

INDIA CALLS BEHAVIOUR 'INDECOROUS'

CJI heckled at London lecture over cockroach remarks

NEW DELHI: 6 JUNE

The Indian High Commission in London has condemned the disruption of a lecture by CJI Surya Kant in London.

An official statement from the High Commission called the heckling "indecorous behaviour."

The High Commission emphasised that differences of opinion must be expressed in a respectful manner.

CJI Surya Kant delivered a lecture at Birkbeck College, London, on 4 June. During the question-and-answer session, some attendees raised questions on the alleged suppression of dissent in India. They also tried to question the Chief Justice on his recent "cockroach" remark.

The organisers, however, cut short those raising the questions, saying they were out of the topic's purview. The CJI delivered a lecture on 'Artificial Intelligence and International Law.'

The videos from the event soon went viral. In the video a woman first referred to the CJI's remarks, then turned to dissent.

"His Lordship made some very important points, I think, about the Indian track record of protecting democracy in the context of AI," she is seen asking.

"We now hear from legal observers within the country as well as global that there's a great deal of concern about growing hostility to dissent in India. And it does seem that this hostility is somewhat reflected in His Lordship's speech."

The woman was cut short by the moderator saying the questions did not relate to the topic. *—Agencies*

Farmers protest over MSP wheat procurement irregularities in R'than

JAIPUR, 6 JUNE

Hundreds of farmers staged a protest in Rajasthan's Sriganganagar district on Saturday, alleging inadequate wheat procurement at Minimum Support Price (MSP) and irregularities in the process. MSP is a safety net where the government guarantees a fixed price, purchasing crops directly from farmers to prevent market crashes and encourage production.

Farmers demanded an increase in wheat procurement quotas and priority for those already registered. They also called for transparency in weighing and payment procedures. The protesters arrived at Gangasingh Chowk in a tractor convoy, raising slogans for their demands.

Police erected barricades and stopped the farmers from reaching the collectorate, leading to a brief standoff that ended after discussions with farmer leaders. Earlier, farmers met at Gurdwara Singh Sabha to plan their strategy before the protest.

Farmer leader Sandeep Singh alleged widespread irregularities and said their grievances remain unresolved despite repeated protests. He warned that the agitation would intensify if demands were not met. *—PTI*

- Farmers demanded an increase in wheat procurement quotas and priority for those already registered. Farmer leaders alleged widespread irregularities and said their grievances remain unresolved

Mansoor to continue his father's legacy in RS

The Congress High Command is said to have recognised his work during the Kerala Assembly polls

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

Congress Rajya Sabha candidate from Karnataka and AICC Secretary in-charge of Kerala and Lakshadweep Mansoor Ali Khan, is poised to continue his father, veteran partyman and former deputy chairman of the Parliament's Upper House K Rahman Khan's legacy.

Khan is among the three candidates besides AICC President Mallikarjun M Kharge and AICC media and publicity wing chairman Pawan Khera contesting the Rajya Sabha seats from Karnataka. The Congress High Command is said to have recognised his work during the Kerala Assembly polls, which resulted in the party led United Democratic Front (UDF) collectively winning 102 seats of the total 140 Assembly seats with the Congress securing 63 seats. Of the 48 seats in the North Zone, also called the Malabar region in Kerala, the Congress won 40 seats.

Khan was earlier AICC secretary in charge of Telangana, when the Congress won 64 of the 119 Assembly seats in 2023. This was the Congress first victory after the formation of state in 2014.

The Rajya Sabha ticket was also to compensate for the opportunities that Khan missed in the past of getting elected to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and the Karnataka Legislative Council.

In 2022, his name was finalised for a Council seat from the Assembly which went to Congress MLC K Abdul Jabbar at the last minute. A month later, the Congress fielded Khan as the second candidate for the biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha aware of the fact that it did not have the requisite numbers to get him elected with the JD(S) not supporting the Congress. Khan lost the election. Later, his name was among those nominated to the Council and was replaced by actor Umashree.

Congress Rajya Sabha candidate from Karnataka Mansoor Ali Khan with his father and four time RS member Rahman Khan — *FB*

The most challenging part in 54-year-old Mansoor Ali Khan's political career was contesting the Bengaluru Central Lok Sabha seat in 2024. The constituency for the first time witnessed a high voltage contest between BJP's PC Mohan and Khan. He gave a tough fight to Mohan, a three term MP who was facing anti-incumbency and reduced the latter's victory margin to 32,707. Bengaluru Central also became the first case study for the Congress to launch an attack on the Election Commission of India of facilitating alleged widespread electoral malpractices, popularly called `vote chori.'

Besides his political pursuits, Khan is an educator. He has been instrumental in the management and growth of reputed schools such as Delhi Public Schools and the School of India. Additionally, he is actively affiliated with several key organisations, including the Karnataka Federation of Independent Schools Management (KFISM), the Management of Independent CBSE Schools Association – Karnataka (MICSA-K), and FICCI ARISE, where he has contributed to shaping educational policies and corporate partnerships.

His father Rahman Khan was a Rajya Sabha member for four terms. Earlier, Rahman Khan served as the Karnataka Legislative Council chairman and was appointed to head the Karnataka State Minorities Commission. During his tenure as the Commission's chairman, he pioneered the first socio-economic status study of the minorities in Karnataka. The survey's findings resulted in the Karnataka government providing 4 per cent reservation for minorities in education and government employment.

After filing his nomination papers on Saturday, Khan said on his X handle that, ``This is a big responsibility, and I don't take it lightly. I'm grateful to the Congress leadership for their trust, and to the countless party workers, colleagues, and citizens who have stood with me. I will work hard to serve Karnataka and the nation.'' —*Salar News*

Former chief minister Siddaramaiah with his former political secretary Naseer Ahmed; Mansoor Ali Khan with Chief Minister DK Shivakumar at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Saturday; Mansoor's wife Tasbia Mansoor Khan with her two sons — *MOHAMMED ASAD*

Kharge declares assets worth Rs 38.76 crore

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge has declared total assets worth Rs 38.76 crore in the affidavit filed along with his nomination papers for the Rajya Sabha election from Karnataka.

According to the affidavit, Kharge's movable assets are valued at Rs 11.37 crore, including Rs 6.60 crore in his name, Rs 4.41 crore in the name of his wife Radha Bai, and Rs 36.09 lakh held under a Hindu Undivided Family (HUF).

The couple and the HUF together own immovable assets worth Rs 27.39 crore, comprising agricultural land in Kalaburagi and other properties in Bengaluru. Kharge and his wife also possess gold jewellery and silverware valued at around Rs 2.04 crore.

The affidavit lists a self-liability of Rs 10 lakh and mentions five pending criminal cases against him. Four FIRs were registered in Assam over allegations that remarks made during political speeches promoted enmity. Kharge filed his nomination papers before Assembly Secretary MK Vishalakshi at Vidhana Soudha. —*PTI*

Mysury Rly Museum gets 19th century weighing machine

MYSURU, 6 JUNE

A rare, 2,000kg weighing scale dating back to the late 1880s has been restored and was unveiled at the Mysuru Railway Museum on Saturday.

The exhibit was inaugurated by Divisional Railway Manager, Mysuru Division Mudit Mittal at the Museum.

The exhibit serves as an important link connecting the legacy of the South Indian Railway with present-day South Western Railway.

Manufactured by the renowned British firm Henry Pooley & Son of Liverpool, the machine was procured by the South Indian Railway and later became part of Southern Railway following the reorganisation of railway networks in 1951. It was last used at Bangarpet Junction, now South Western Railway.

The scale was used to weigh passengers' luggage, parcels and freight consignments. The machine is an example of Victorian-era engineering.

The restoration forms part of efforts to preserve railway heritage and showcase the evolution of railway logistics. Officials noted that Henry Pooley & Son was among the most respected manufacturers of weighing equipment in the British Empire, with its products widely used across railways, ports and industries.

Railway authorities requested visitors not to climb onto the platform or tamper with it. —*Salar News*

Bengaluru dvp portfolio irrelevant if DKS has BDA, BMRDA: Ashoka

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly R Ashoka on Saturday slammed portfolio allocation in the DK Shivakumar-led government, stating that the Bengaluru Development portfolio, which was allocated to Krishna Byre Gowda, is irrelevant if the Chief Minister was in charge of the BDA and BMRDA.

"The government's portfolio allocation farce has completely exposed the real priorities of the Congress party," Ashoka stated on X.

In a rare division of responsibilities over Bengaluru's development, Gowda has been entrusted with overseeing the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), the Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) and Namma Metro, while the Shivakumar maintains direct control of the Bengaluru Development Authority (BDA) and the Bengaluru Metropolitan Region Development Authority (BMRDA), two agencies that hat oversee some of the City's biggest land and infrastructure projects.

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly R Ashoka on Saturday slammed portfolio allocation in CM DK Shivakumar's government —*PTI*

What is left for the Bengaluru Development Minister, asked Ashoka, if Shivakumar kept the BDA and BMRDA under his control. "It seems that the Development Minister is irrelevant in this government," he added.

NO AGRI, EDU MINISTER YET?

Ashoka also by not naming an Agricultural Minister yet, the DKS led government is showing anti-farmer sentiment.

"The Agriculture Department, which should take care of the availability of seeds, supply of fertilisers, crop loans, crop insurance, monitoring the rainfall situation, is now orphaned without a minister," he wrote, noting the onset of the sowing season.

> **KN Rajanna has made significant contributions to the cooperative sector; efforts on to include him in the Cabinet**
>
> -G Parameshwara, Deputy Chief Minister

The Padmanabhanagar MLA also noted on the other hand, the new academic year has begun, bringing challenges of distributing textbooks and uniforms to lakh of students and fixing the crumbling infrastructure, but there is no full-time education Minister.

"There is fierce competition among Congress leaders like vultures only for accounts that will facilitate the business of contracts and commissions worth thousands of crores of rupees," Ashoka alleged. —*Salar News*

Woman, live-in partner booked in daughter's death

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

A 39-year-old woman and her live-in partner have been booked for allegedly murdering the woman's five-year-old daughter, police said on Saturday. The child identified as Vennela was found dead on 25 March.

A case was registered on 4 June at Kadugodi police station on a complaint by the girl's father against his estranged wife Priyanka and her partner Mohan G. According to the FIR, the complainant married Priyanka in 2007 and had two daughters with her.

The complainant claimed that his daughter was being viewed as an obstacle to their relationship and private life and he claims she intentionally killed the daighter before attempting to destroy evidence of the murder.

He alleged that marital discord developed over the years and that Priyanka began a relationship with Mohan after reconnecting with him in 2025.

Notably, the couple's elder daughter stayed with him, their younger daughter, Vennela, lived with Priyanka, the FIR said.

The father alleged that Priyanka gave conflicting accounts of the events leading to their younger daughter's death.

The father stated that he became suspicious after obtaining the post-mortem report and shared it with his sister, a paediatrician.

An invesigation is underway and the allegations are being probede police.—*PTI*

Another person drowns in Kolar-Chikkaballpur pond

CHINTAMANI, 6 JUNE

Another person drowned in a Krushi Honda (farm pond) in Chintamani on Friday.

Over the past two months, at least 10 people have drowned in the Kolar and Chikkaballapur districts, with many entering ponds to beat the heat.

On Friday, 45-year-old Nagarajappa drowned when he accidentally slipped into the Krushi Honda at Konapalli village when he was trying to wash his hands and legs after attending farm work, said Shivaraj, Chintamani Rural Police Inspector.

Despite Kolar and Chikkaballapur district administrations instructing farmers to put up fencing around Krushi Hondas, the order remains only on paper.

The claim that authorities will close unfenced ponds is not properly implemented, resulting in drownings. —*Salar News*

BJP MLA slapped with non-bailable warrant in cow slaughter case

BIDAR, 6 JUNE

A court has issued a non-bailable warrant (NBW) against BJP MLA from the Basavakalyan Assembly constituency, Sharanu Salagar, after he failed to appear for proceedings.

The Court in the City ordered the warrant following Salagar's absence during the trial linked to an incident from Bakrid 2023.

Salagar was accused of creating a disturbance by alleging illegal cow slaughter at a Muslim household. The police had already filed a charge sheet, but the court issued the NBW on Thursday.

The warrants also target eight others in the trial linked to Bagrid 2023.

Sanjukumar Sugure, a Basavakalyan businessman, filed the complaint on 29 December, 2025, claiming Salagar borrowed the amount in installments, promising repayment within six months, but failed.

The complainant alleged the MLA's cheque bounced, his bank account was closed, and Salagar threatened him when asked to repay. —*Salar News*

15 escape building collapse after b'day party

BELAGAVI, 6 JUNE

A major tragedy was averted at Athani town in Belagavi district after an old building, weakened by heavy rainfall, collapsed moments after a group of youths attending a birthday celebration evacuated the premises on Friday night.

No casualties or injuries have been reported.

According to reports, around 15 youths had gathered in a yellow-painted building in Athani to celebrate a friend's birthday.

During the celebrations, they noticed unusual sounds emanating from the structure, prompting them to suspect that the building might be unsafe.

Acting swiftly, they moved out of the building. Within moments of their evacuation, the entire structure came crashing down.

All those present in the building escaped unharmed, preventing what could have been a major disaster.

The incident occurred within the jurisdiction of the Athani Police Station

Authorities are currently assessing the circumstances surrounding the collapse, which is believed to have been triggered by continuous heavy rainfall taking place in the region. —*Salar News*

KHADER, ULEMAS TALK COMMUNITY'S ISSUES

Health minister UT Khader met several ulemas of Karnataka and discussed issues concerning the Muslim community on Saturday. Khader met Mufti Ifthikar Kasmi, Karnataka president of Jamaat Ulema and Maulana Zulfiqar Raza Noori of Jamia Hazrath Bilal. The Ulemas have appreciated the Congress high command's gesture of giving the Rajya Sabha ticket to a Muslim by approving the candidature of AICC secretary in charge of Kerala and Lakshadweep Mansoor Ali Khan. —*SALAR NEWS*

—WIKIPEDIA

Case over fake post about Keralam minister Shaji

T'PURAM, 6 JUNE

Police have registered a case over a fake social media post featuring Kerala LSGD Minister KM Shaji, falsely claiming the building permit fee had been reduced. The Thiruvananthapuram City Cyber Police filed the case following a complaint from a person close to the minister. The post circulated on Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, alleged that the department had withdrawn a recent fee hike. Police are investigating the origin of the post under provisions of the BNS, the Information Technology Act, and the Kerala Police Act, trying to trace its source. —*PTI*

—ANI

Suspended Cong MLA's hubby joins BJP in Haryana

CHANDIGARH, 6 JUNE

Rishi Pal, husband of suspended Haryana Congress MLA Renu Bala, joined the BJP with supporters, welcomed by Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini. Saini visited Vyaspur village in Sadhaura constituency, promising to prioritise development projects. He announced a Rs 5 crore grant for the region's development. Rishi Pal, an engineer, claimed that Congress leaders falsely accused his wife of cross-voting in March's Rajya Sabha polls, which led to the suspension of five Congress MLAs. Saini stated, "Rishi Pal has expressed his faith in the party's policies," emphasising BJP's commitment to Haryana's growth and development. —*PTI*

—ANI

NIA arrests ex-TMC MLA in Bhangar bomb blast case

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested former Trinamool Congress MLA Saokat Molla, identified as the main conspirator in the Bhangar bomb blast case in West Bengal, officials confirmed. Molla, who had been on the run, was captured in South 24 Parganas after extensive searches. The blast on March 19 during crude bomb manufacturing killed one person and injured others. The National Investigation Agencyfound Molla directed others to make the bomb and tamper with the scene. His arrest follows the detention of a suspect who transported victims. The NIA is interrogating the accused to uncover any further conspiracies, as the investigation continues. —*PTI*

60 next-gen trains for Kolkata Metro, says Vaishnaw

KOLKATA, 6 JUNE

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced on Saturday that sixty next-generation trains will be introduced for Kolkata Metro within the next five years. Speaking during a meeting with Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari at Nabanna, Vaishnaw said, "Only 28km of the Kolkata Metro network was completed in 42 years, while 45km of metro lines have been added since Narendra Modi became Prime Minister in 2014. In the next five years, 60 next-generation trains will be introduced in the Kolkata Metro train system. —*PTI*

Ahead of INDIA meet, CPI(M) seeks Cong stand

Cong had accused CPI(M) of BJP deal

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Ahead of a key meeting of INDIA constituents on Monday, CPI(M) general secretary MA Baby has sought clarification from the Congress on claims by some of its leaders during the Kerala Assembly election campaign that the Left had an understanding with the BJP.

Sources said Baby wrote a letter to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, heavily criticizing the Congress attacks on the CPI(M). Copies of the letter were also sent to other INDIA partners.

An opposition leader who received the letter said Baby argued that the accusations, repeatedly made by senior Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi and Kharge, struck at the basis of the opposition alliance.

Referring to the Congress campaign in Kerala, the CPI(M) leader accused the Congress of running a "systematic campaign" alleging that the Left and the BJP had reached a political arrangement and that the then chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan enjoyed a special understanding with Prime Minister Modi.

CPI(M) General Secretary MA Baby and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge—*PTI*

Such charges, he said, were incompatible with the spirit of the INDIA bloc.

He also pointed out that INDIA was constituted as a broad platform to fight the BJP, and parties of diverse ideologies and programmes who are electoral rivals in several states came together for this purpose, adding that the CPI(M) had worked consistently since the alliance's inception in 2023 to strengthen opposition unity.

Questioning the Congress' position, Baby noted that the party simultaneously partnered with the CPI(M) at the national level while accusing it of collusion with the BJP in Kerala, and said it cannot be taken lightly. Warning that the issue had implications for opposition cohesion, Baby said the Congress leadership needed to "clear the air" on its "disruptive moves" before the 8 June INDIA meeting.

The DMK and the AAP are unlikely to attend the INDIA meeting. — *PTI*

TAMIL NADU POLITICS

DMK let its allies support TVK to avoid Prez rule: Stalin

CHENNAI, 6 JUNE

DMK chief MK Stalin claimed on Saturday that his party had allowed alliance partners to support the TVK in government formation to prevent the imposition of President's rule.

Welcoming the AIADMK cadres who joined DMK at a function held here, Stalin said, "When they informed me of their plans, I told them, you may go, it is your choice; I will not stop you. I saw them off with the sole intention of preventing the imposition of President's rule in the state, which could have paved the way for BJP rule in Tamil Nadu."

"This government is functioning today thanks to the support of the parties that were part of our alliance, parties that aligned with us because they believed the DMK should come to power," the former CM said.

Stalin said that leaders of alliance parties have themselves stated that they had informed the DMK president about the extension of support to TVK to form the government. "Let us pledge to put an end to this government that exists only through our alliance support," he added.

"Success and failure will occur. We do not lose our heads over victory, or become disheartened by defeat," he said, adding, "It is in this context, even though we have lost and are no longer in power, we continue to serve as the opposition," he said. — *PTI*

FOUR FORMER AIADMK MINISTERS JOIN TVK

CHENNAI, 6 JUNE

In yet another setback for the AIADMK, which faces a severe internal crisis, the party's four former ministers and ex-MLAs have joined the ruling TVK at its headquarters here on Saturday.

The AIADMK leaders who joined TVK are Udumalai K Radhakrishnan, MC Sampath, Kadambur C Raju and NR Sivapathi.

They joined the TVK in the presence of TVK

General Secretary N Anand and the General Secretary for election campaign management, Aadhav Arjuna.

Similarly, Ex-MP A Ilavarasan also joined the TVK.

Seven former AIADMK MLAs, Sundarraj, Rajamuthu, Manraj, Rajavarman Panneer selvam, M. Murugan and N Siva, have also joined TVK. Similarly, two former DMK MLAs P Kamaraj and MS Shanmugam have also joined the TVK.

TVK sources said that around 2,500 people, including office bearers at the state, district, town, ward, block-units of the AIADMK and DMK, joined the TVK. — *PTI*

RJD man poses as Rabri's gateman

RJD workers stand guard at the entrance of the residence of former Bihar chief ministers Lalu Prasad and Rabri Devi in Patna —*PTI*

PATNA, 6 JUNE

RJD spokesperson Shakti Yadav sat outside the residence of former Bihar chief minister Rabri Devi on Saturday, claiming that the party's top leaders "returned" the security cover provided to them by the NDA government in the state.

Yadav, a former MLA, sat in front of the gate of the 10, Circular Road bungalow, alleging that the proverbial first family of his party was indignant over "repeated insults by the government" and the RJD rank and file would, therefore, take care of their security needs on their own.

The high drama unfolded two days after the home department announced that the security cover provided to Rabri Devi and Lalu Prasad and their family including younger son Tejashwi Yadav was being downgraded.

"The government wants our leaders to be killed. But we will try to ensure their security on our own," Shakti Yadav fumed.

Notably, the downgrading of security cover came barely a week after the 10, Circular Road bungalow was allotted to BJP minister Nand Kishor Ram, prompting an indignant Rabri Devi to challenge Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary that he get the bungalow, occupied by her for two decades, by "force."

Meanwhile, NDA leaders chided the opposition party for making a fuss over the issue and said that the decision taken by the government should be "respected."

"The security committee makes decisions. Rabri Devi and Lalu Ji are both receiving the security entitled to them as former chief ministers," said Sanjay Saraogi, state BJP president. — *PTI*

Docus about TMC MLA meetings surface online

KOLKATA, 6 JUNE

A fresh twist emerged in the battle for the leadership of the TMC Legislature Party on Saturday after documents purportedly relating to two meetings of party MLAs at Mamata Banerjee's Kalighat residence surfaced on social media, prompting rebel Leader of the Opposition Ritabrata Banerjee to question their authenticity. The documents pertain to meetings held on 6 May and 19 May amid the struggle for control of the opposition space in the WB Assembly.

As per records, 67 MLAs attended the 6 May meeting at 30B Harish Chatterjee Street, where signatures of legislators were seen alongside the names of their constituencies and the date.

While most legislators signed in Bengali or English, some names were written in block letters.

Among those whose names appeared in block letters were MLAs Subhasis Das, Chandranath Sinha, Dinen Roy and Baharul Islam, according to the documents.

TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee addresses a protest against the alleged attacks on party leaders in Kolkata —*PTI*

The papers described the 6 May gathering as a meeting convened for the election of the leader of the opposition, deputy leader and chief whip of the TMC.

The records stated that former Kolkata mayor Firhad Hakim presided over the meeting and that the proposal for electing the legislature party leader was unanimously approved.

Another set of records relating to the 19 May meeting carried signatures of 59 TMC legislators.

A rebel TMC MLA, claimed that two separate signatures had been taken from legislators during the 19 May meeting. — *PTI*

Weapons used to create fear: CM after raid

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on Saturday said the police seized a cache of illegal firearms and ammunition in two districts and alleged that weapons were stockpiled and used to terrorise people during TMC rule.

Chief Minister Adhikari said the seizures were made during raids near Sarberia Bazar in Kumrakhali and Basanti in South 24 Parganas district and Sandeshkhali areas in North 24 Parganas district. — PTI

OWAISI SLAMS WB DRIVE TO CANCEL RATION CARDS BASED ON SIR

Slamming the West Bengal government's drive to delete ration cards based on SIR-linked verification, AIMIM President Asaduddin Owaisi asked why access to ration cards should depend on whether a beneficiary's name is on the voter list or not.

What is the point of Aadhaar authentication if the voter roll is being used as the deciding factor for providing ration, he asked on Saturday.

He said many people who were excluded from the voters list during SIR were genuine voters. —*PTI*

INDIAN ENVOY IN BEIJING

'India, China share learning, dialogue legacy over 2 millennia'

BEIJING, 6 JUNE

The Indian Ambassador to China, Vikram Doraiswami, said that mutual learning of languages and a dialogue of ideas over two millennia have been the defining feature of the ties between the two countries.

Doraiswami, who took over as India's envoy to China last month, visited the Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU), where he delivered a lecture on Friday, and interacted with students and faculty members.

BFSU, a premier institution for foreign languages in China, offers courses in 102 languages like Tamil, Hindi, Bengali, Sanskrit and Urdu. It recently added Punjabi to its list.

The languages are taught primarily to Chinese students as well as diplomats and officials.

Many of its students go on to work with Chinese foreign-language media organisations, including state radio and television services catering to overseas audiences and to foreigners working in China.

The Indian Ambassdor to China, Vikram Doraiswami —*ANI*

During his lecture, Doraiswami, a fluent Mandarin speaker, highlighted how the study of languages, societies and a dialogue of ideas had been a defining feature of India-China engagement for more than two millennia.

"Citing examples from the Mauryan period to the modern era, he noted how exchanges between the world's two oldest continuous civilizations enriched both societies through the sharing of knowledge, philosophy, artistic traditions, technologies, and innovation," according to a post on X by the Indian Embassy in Beijing.

"He emphasised that such interactions remained more important than ever as both countries undergo profound economic, technological and sociological transformation," it said.

The lecture was followed by an interactive session during which Doraiswami answered questions from students. During his visit, Doraiswami was briefed on the activities of the university by Beijing Foreign Studies University President Jia Wenjian. — *PTI*

Pradhan's refusal to quit exposes his power hunger: Cong

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

The Congress has criticised Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's continued tenure, claiming it reflects his desire for power and accusing him of incompetence in overseeing a "compromised ministry". In a post on X, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said that if the education ministry had acted with integrity during the CBSE exams, the crisis affecting lakhs of students could have been avoided.

Ramesh stated, "The skeletons are tumbling out fast," citing reports on COEMTP submitting two cybersecurity certificates to CBSE to meet requirements. He alleged both certificates were linked to other clients, with one nearly two years expired and the other audited as a temporary application.

He claimed the CBSE awarded the contract to COEMTP at inflated rates and that cybersecurity flaws, flagged in February 2025 by ethical hackers, were denied by CBSE until the portal was irretrievably compromised. — *PTI*

Sanctions against India will 'boomerang': Putin

ST PETERSBURG, 6 JUNE

Russian President Vladimir Putin said that any attempt to undermine India's sovereignty through "threats of sanctions" would "boomerang immediately" under Prime Minister Modi's leadership.

Putin made these remarks at the annual St Petersburg International Economic Forum on Friday in response to a question about his comments during an interaction with heads of leading global news agencies, including PTI, on Thursday night.

Putin said that he has been in close talks with Prime Minister Modi for a long period, while recalling the time when the Indian leader was banned from entering the US.

"I know Modi will never forget about it," Putin said. "Now that he is (the) prime minister, all sanctions have been eliminated, and the relationship between the US and India is developing."

Asked about the possibility of India facing US sanctions if it were to acquire Russian defence systems such as the Su-57 aircraft or the S-500 air defence platform, Putin said, "India is always guided by its national interests."

Putin said that Russia's cooperation with India, just like with all other partners, is not subject to politics.

Highlighting Russia's long-standing relationship with India, especially in defence, Putin said, "We concentrate not just on trade. We're also concentrating on R&D." He highlighted how experts from both countries are working on BrahMos.

On the fifth-generation stealth aircraft Sukhoi Su-57, Putin said Russia had proposed a joint development programme with India, but later pursued the project independently. — *PTI*

— PTI

9 killed in pick-up vehicle and truck collision in Punjab

FEROZEPUR, 6 JUNE

Nine people died, and several were injured when a pick-up vehicle collided with a truck near Janga Wala Mour on the Ferozepur-Fazilka road. The vehicle was carrying 32 people, including women and children, from Jalalabad to Beas for ash immersion in the Beas river. Most of them died, with the injured taken to Ferozepur Civil Hospital. Dr Nikhil Gupta said critical cases were referred to Guru Gobind Singh Government Medical College in Faridkot. Senior SSP Bhupinder Singh visited the scene, and police are investigating. Anshpreet Singh, 12, survived with minor injuries and was travelling to immerse his grandmother's ashes. The deceased include Karnail Singh, Lakshmi Rani, Sukhwinder Kaur, Bhago Rani, Maya Bai, Surinder Singh, Raj Kumar, Darshan Singh and Vidya Rani.—*PTI*

Bihar hospital licence suspended after fire kills 7

MUZAFFARPUR, 6 JUNE

The registration of the private hospital in Bihar's Muzaffarpur, where seven people died of asphyxiation after a fire broke out in the ICU ward, has been suspended, an official said on Saturday. Five deaths occurred on Thursday when smoke filled the ICU after a short circuit, and the staff allegedly ran away, leaving the patients to die. The sixth person died during treatment at another healthcare facility on Friday. The Civil Surgeon directed the hospital management to submit a factual explanation, along with the necessary records and evidence, within seven days. Three hospital staff members were arrested. All the deaths were caused by asphyxiation, and there were no burn injuries. —*PTI*

Dharamshala jolted by multiple earthquakes

DHARAMSHALA, 6 JUNE

A series of earthquakes, including a significant tremor measuring 5.0 on the Richter scale, shook the Dharamshala region, triggering panic among residents. No loss of life or major property damage was reported, officials said on Saturday. The earthquakes struck the region on 5 June, with the strongest occurring at 10.04 pm. Its epicentre was located about 40km from Dharamshala, between Dhar Ghadoi and RF Kugti in the Dhauladhar ranges along the Kangra-Chamba border, they said. According to seismologists, low-intensity earthquakes in the geologically young Himalayan region may help release accumulated tectonic stress along fault lines. Experts caution such activity does not rule out possibility of a major earthquake. —*PTI*

Rs 10cr hydroponic ganja seized at Lucknow airport

LUCKNOW, 6 JUNE

Customs officials at Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport in Lucknow have arrested an Indian passenger and seized suspected hydroponic marijuana worth about Rs 10.39 crore from his baggage, officials said on Saturday. The passenger arrived at the Lucknow airport on Oman Air flight WY-265 from Bangkok via Muscat. Acting on the intelligence, customs officials intercepted him at the Green Channel and subjected his personal belongings and baggage to X-ray screening and examination. Officials recovered 13 polythene packets containing a green-coloured substance suspected to be ganja (marijuana), specifically hydroponic weed. The accused was arrested, while the suspected contraband was seized. —*PTI*

CBSE retains COEMPT for answer-sheet scanning

Moves data to its servers; 30K of 40 cr scanned pages faulty

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

The CBSE has retained COEMPT Eduteck Pvt Ltd for scanning answer sheets on Saturday, during the re-evaluation process, while moving all data and records related to the On-screen marking (OSM) system from the vendor's servers to CBSE-controlled servers, an IIT official said.

The IIT official associated with the security audit said that COEMPT's OSM platform continues to be used for the re-evaluation process.

"COEMPT will scan the copies for re-evaluation," the official said.

When asked about whether COEMPT will be able to scan answer sheets despite its track record, the official said, "They scanned 40 crore pages, of which about 30,000 odd have problems. That means about 1 in 10,000 pages were problematic. Now they only need to scan problematic pages. So they should be able to scan without any problem."

National Students Union of India (NSUI) members stage a protest over the CBSEs OSM (On-Screen Marking) system in New Delhi. —*PTI*

As of 4 June, the Board had received 70,433 applications through the post-result grievance redressal mechanism, including 7,314 applications for verification of marks and 63,119 applications for re-evaluation.

However, all answer-sheet data and records have now been transferred to CBSE servers.

The continued involvement of COEMPT comes amid the controversy surrounding the company after vulnerabilities were reported in the OSM portal used for verification, obtaining photocopies of answer books and re-evaluation of CBSE board examination answer sheets.

Following concerns over the platform's security and reports of attempted cyberattacks, CBSE brought in teams from IIT Kanpur and IIT Madras to review and strengthen the system.

The official said IIT Kanpur's cybersecurity team worked for more than 10 days on two key systems which is the CBSE registration portal and the OSM re-evaluation portal. The OSM portal also underwent extensive security reviews. The official said a "blue team" responsible for improving and strengthening the code worked alongside a "red team" tasked with identifying vulnerabilities and attempting to break the system. —*PTI*

Accused can't be denied chargesheet documents: SC

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

The Supreme Court said that an accused cannot be denied access to documents forming part of the chargesheet as withholding them could seriously compromise their right to a fair trial.

The observations came from a bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and AS Chandurkar, which directed that a typed copy of some "highly confidential" documents be provided to retired Major General VK Singh, who is facing prosecution in a case lodged in 2007 under the provisions of the Official Secrets Act, 1923.

The bench noted it was not the CBI's case that documents sought by Singh, who was also a former RAW official, were not relevant for the purpose of trial, and the only objection taken by the prosecution was that they were "highly confidential as they were connected with national security" and if its copies were supplied, there were chances that those may come out in the public domain.

The SC passed the order on Singh's plea challenging a September order of the Delhi High Court last year.

The high court had modified a December 2009 order of a trial court, which had directed the prosecution to supply copies of documents sought by Singh.

Singh had filed an application under Section 207 of the CrPC before the trial court seeking a direction to the prosecution to supply some documents, which formed part of the chargesheet but were not supplied to him.

Section 207 deals with the supply of a copy of the police report and other documents to accused individuals. —*PTI*

UNSC membership not meant for peddling lies: India to Pak

UNITED NATIONS, 6 JUNE

India has slammed Pakistan for its "unwarranted reference" to J&K at the UN, telling the current non-permanent member of the global body that it was a huge responsibility and not a forum for peddling "biased, false narratives."

"The unwarranted reference by Pakistan to a matter strictly internal to India, the Union Territory of J&K, has compelled me to respond," India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish said on Friday.

The strong retort by Harish came after Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad raised the J&K issue in the UN General Assembly on Friday.

Pakistan, which constantly raises the issue of J&K as well as other topics internal to India at various UN platforms, currently sits in the Security Council as a non-permanent member and its tenure will end this year.

Harish said in the UNGA hall that Pakistan has decided not to spare this forum either from their characteristic misuse of august UN platforms for their divisive political interests. Making it clear that J&K was, is and will always remain an integral and inalienable part of India, Harish emphasised that any assertions to the contrary are baseless, devoid of and inconsistent with historical facts.

The Indian envoy also pointed out that the international community recognises the importance of reforming the Security Council. —*PTI*

NEET aspirant's suicide note missing in case file

NAGPUR, 6 JUNE

A show cause notice has been issued against a police officer for allegedly failing to attach a suicide note, purportedly written by a female NEET aspirant in Nagpur, to the case papers, a senior officer said on Saturday. DCP Nityanand Jha explained, "The suicide note was mentioned in the station diary entry. However, it was not attached to the case papers."

The Investigation Officer, Nikhil Tabhane of Ambazari police station, has been served the notice for this lapse. An official said the note was not mentioned in any documents related to the case, and even DCP Jha was unaware of its existence. When the matter was exposed, senior officers conducted an inquiry and submitted a report to the DCP.

Akanksha Chaturvedi, 18, a NEET-UG aspirant from Madhya Pradesh, allegedly hanged herself at her Nagpur home on 20 May, days after appearing for the exam on 3 May. In her note, she stated there was "no guarantee" she would score well in the retest.

The note was discovered by her family days later, who found it among her study material and submitted it to police. Her father, Krishna Kumar Chaturvedi, said she was optimistic after her exam but became disturbed following reports of the leak and rescheduling. —*PTI*

Poor FSL infra bails out rape & murder accused

PRAYAGRAJ, 5 JUNE

The Allahabad High Court has granted bail to an accused in a rape and murder case with a "heavy heart and great pain" due to lack of scientific evidence linking the suspect to the crime.

The court said it expects that the state government would provide high-end machines to Forensic Science Laboratories (FSL) and sufficient staff. It directed the high court registrar (compliance) to send a copy of its order to the UP chief secretary, for the perusal of the chief minister.

Justice Arun Kumar Singh Deshwal allowed the bail application of the accused, Manoj, as the FSL report did not show that the DNA found in the vaginal smear of the deceased belonged to the applicant because of insufficient generation of the DNA profile.

The court expressed serious concerns over the FSL infrastructure.

The court on May 21 said, "Outdated machine as well as incomplete infrastructure in FSL is the main reason for non-generation of DNA profile and no one can be blamed except the state government who has many other issues to consider apart from providing basic infrastructure." —*PTI*

Won't distribute Sacco's book on 2013 riots: Penguin

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Journalist and author Joe Sacco's graphic novel on Muzaffarnagar riots of 2013 will not be distributed in India, Penguin Random House India said on Saturday.

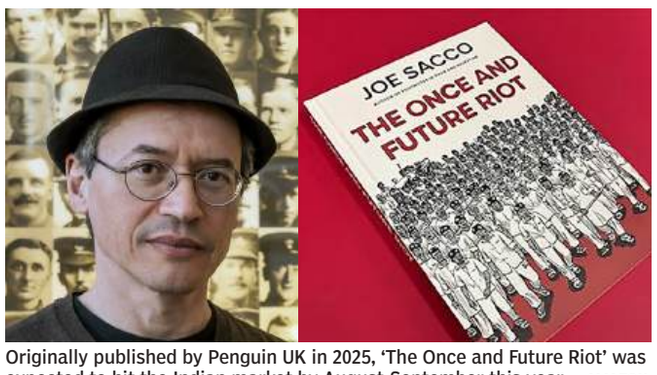
Originally published by Penguin UK in 2025, 'The Once and Future Riot' was expected to hit the Indian market by August-September this year.

According to a spokesperson at Penguin Random House India (PRHI), the decision was taken after "taking into account local legal, regulatory, commercial, and market considerations".

They added that it was "a routine publishing and distribution review, not an assessment of the author's views or the merits of the work".

Earlier, The Indian Express had reported that the publisher has pulled the plug on the book's distribution over "an inaccurate map" and that "no changes are forthcoming" from the originating publisher.

"We have decided there will be no distribution of the book due to these red flags not being attended to," according to the news report quoting Gaurav Shrinagesh, CEO of Penguin Random House (PRH) India.



Originally published by Penguin UK in 2025, 'The Once and Future Riot' was expected to hit the Indian market by August-September this year —*AMAZON*

The novelist has received critical acclaim for his illustration of conflict in Gaza, Palestine and the Balkans.

In the new book, Sacco chronicles the 2013 communal clashes in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar that allegedly left over 60 dead and more than 40,000 displaced. The book's imported copies are available on some online platforms. —*PTI*

Delhi hotel fire: Cook arrested as probe widens

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Delhi Police has arrested the cook of a south Delhi hotel where a devastating fire killed 21 people earlier this week, with investigators alleging that his negligence played a role in triggering the blaze, officials said on Saturday.

Several others connected with the establishment have also been detained regarding the fire at Flourish Stays Bed and Breakfast in Malviya Nagar's Hauz Rani area.

Preliminary findings indicate that the actions of the cook, identified as Keshav Negi, may have contributed to the outbreak of the fire.

The latest arrest comes as the Delhi Police widens its probe into the tragedy, examining alleged safety violations.

The blaze ripped through the hotel on Wednesday morning, killing 21, including a 16-year-old girl and several foreign nationals from Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Iraq, Congo, Mozambique and Liberia.

Uttar Pradesh Police Fire and Emergency Services DG Sujeet Pandey inspects fire safety at a hotel, in Lucknow —*PTI*

- Preliminary findings indicate that the actions of the cook may have contributed to the outbreak of the fire

Police had earlier arrested hotel owner Lavkesh Bajaj. The investigation has found that the hotel was operating 28 rooms despite permission for only six. Authorities also found alleged deficiencies in fire safety measures and ventilation. The basement entrance was locked when rescue teams arrived, forcing firefighters to cut open the door, the FIR stated.

Investigators have also focused on Jay Mishra, a longtime associate and accountant of Bajaj, who has been absconding. Police sources said Mishra's name has surfaced in several documents linked to the hotel. —*PTI*

FISH PRASADAM EVENT

Non-profit society members distribute food during the annual 'Fish Prasadam' (Fish Medicine) event, at Nampally Exhibition Grounds, in Hyderabad, Telangana, on Saturday. The event involves swallowing a live murrel fingerling stuffed with a secret yellow herbal paste, said to cure respiratory illnesse — *PTI*

COST OF GROOMING

Haircut, shaving get costlier in M'rashtra amid W Asia war

MUMBAI, 6 JUNE

Citing a rise in the cost of consumables and other materials amid the Iran-US conflict, a body representing the barber community in Maharashtra has increased charges for haircuts and other grooming services by 20 per cent, with the revised rates coming into effect from Saturday.

A functionary of Maharashtra Nabhik Mahamandal from Nagpur told PTI that under the revised rate chart, a haircut will now cost Rs 180, while shaving will cost Rs 120.

Charges for beard trimming have been set at Rs 150, head massage at Rs 180 and hair wash at Rs 120. The rate for a facial starts at Rs 700, while a hair spa will cost Rs 600.

He said the increase was necessitated by the cost rise of consumables and other materials used in salons as the conflict escalated.

- The hike is attributed to higher operating expenses and global economic uncertainties

The functionary, Shyam Askarkar, attributed the hike to higher operating expenses and global economic uncertainties, which, he said, have pushed up the prices of several products used by salon operators. "Generally, we revise the rates in January after a gap of two years. However, this time we were compelled to revise them mid-term due to the sharp increase in the prices of consumables and other materials used in salons."

As per estimates, Maharashtra has more than a lakh barber shops. The organisation doesn't represent premium or luxury salons, where generally haircut charges typically start around Rs 500. —*PTI*

OP BLUE STAR ANNIVERSARY

Sikh people gather at the Golden Temple on the 42nd anniversary observance of Operation Blue Star, in Amritsar, Punjab, on Saturday. Operation Blue Star was a military assault conducted by the Army between 1 and 10 June, 1984. Ordered by then-prime minister Indira Gandhi, its objective was to remove Sikh separatist leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and his armed militants from the Golden Temple complex, in Amritsar, Punjab. Tragically, the operation resulted in the deaths of hundreds of innocent civilians who were trapped inside during the crossfire – *PTI*

West Asia war clouds India's growth outlook

The economy is expected to face a more challenging external environment this year – *AI*

India's economy expanded at faster than expected rate in fiscal 2026 but economists cautioned that growth is likely to moderate this year amid rising energy costs and global uncertainty linked to the West Asia conflict.

Data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) on Friday showed gross domestic product (GDP) growth accelerated to 7.8 per cent in the January-March quarter from 8 per cent in the preceding three months, taking full-year growth to 7.7 per cent, above the second advance estimate of 7.6 per cent.

Economists said resilient domestic demand, healthy private consumption and strong investment activity helped the economy weather the initial impact of the conflict in West Asia, which intensified during March.

"The growth was despite headwinds from the West Asia conflict," said Dharmakirti Joshi, Chief Economist at CRISIL, noting that fourth-quarter growth remained well above the average pace recorded over the previous 10 quarters.

Rumki Majumdar, economist at Deloitte India, said the expansion was broad-based and underpinned by both demand and production. Gross value added (GVA) growth of 7.9 per cent exceeded GDP growth, reflecting strength across services, manufacturing and construction.

Analysts, however, expect growth to slow in fiscal 2027 as higher crude oil and commodity prices, softer global growth, supply-chain disruptions and the prospect of a below-normal monsoon weigh on activity.

CRISIL maintained its FY27 GDP growth forecast at 6.6 per cent, while HDFC Bank projected growth at 6.5 per cent, assuming average crude oil prices of about USD 95 per barrel. Both institutions warned that rising input costs, weaker exports, elevated inflation and a potential moderation in investment activity could dampen economic momentum.

DBS Bank said the economy entered the new fiscal year from a position of relative strength but cautioned that the full impact of the West Asia conflict is yet to be reflected in economic data. The lender flagged risks from disruptions in critical input supplies, higher energy and food prices, and tighter financial conditions.

While economists remain broadly optimistic about India's domestic-demand driven growth story, most expect the economy to face a more challenging external environment this year, with risks to growth skewed to the downside.

"In fiscal 2027 (April 2026 to March 2027 financial year) growth is set to weaken amid multiple headwinds, including higher prices of crude and other commodities, softer global growth and forecast of a below-normal monsoon. Global supply chain disruptions are already intensifying cost pressures and reduced input availability is expected to add to the pressure," said Joshi of CRISIL.

"We maintain our GDP growth forecast for fiscal 2027 at 6.6 per cent, with risks tilted to the downside. Despite the slowdown in real GDP, the nominal GDP growth is set to be higher due to higher inflation based on both Wholesale Price Index and the Consumer Price Index."

Deloitte India's Rumki Majumdar said the fact that GVA growth at 7.9 per cent outpaced GDP growth suggests that India's expansion was not solely demand-driven but also backed by strong production momentum. Pe

"We remain cautiously optimistic about the economic outlook in the next FY. We believe tensions in the Middle East will ease over the coming months and that associated supply-chain disruptions will gradually subside by the end of the year. India's strong domestic demand, coupled with proactive government intervention, should help cushion the economy from external headwinds. The government's front-loaded capital expenditure programme is already providing an important growth buffer at a time when private investment sentiment remains cautious."

Radhika Rao, Senior Economist & Executive Director, DBS Bank said high frequency data for rural and urban demand points to relative resilience in the January-March quarter. "While the US-Iran conflict broke out towards the end of 4QFY26, output in the quarter was relatively insulated from bulk of adverse impact, with corporates tackling a build-up in cost pressures by tapping into inventories. Certain pockets of manufacturing activity, however, were impacted, including fertiliser, cement, etc."

HDFC Bank said it was encouraging to see that growth remained broad based with a pickup in consumer spending as well as investments last fiscal. "The rise in investments stands out, particularly as government spending had moderated in Q4 FY26, signalling that expansion in private investments was likely the key driver. Sector wise data shows that services like trade, hotels, transport and communication grew at a healthy pace, along with continued momentum in manufacturing and construction activity."

"That said, we would be cautious in linearly extrapolating recent trends. The disruption due to the conflict is likely to start showing up in economic data only over the coming months," it said. Looking ahead, the bank estimated GDP growth at 6.5 per cent for FY27 assuming oil average of USD 95 per barrel. —*PTI*

SALAR

US heads are talking about public ownership in AI

It was perhaps a surprising private overture from OpenAI CEO Sam Altman to Senetor Bernie Sanders.

The meeting between the two had come just after the Vermont senator announced a plan for the public to take a 50 per cent ownership stake in artificial intelligence companies such as OpenAI, using their stock to create a public wealth fund that would spread the fortune generated by AI behemoths.

Altman told Sanders that he, too, wants the public to have equity in AI companies. Though the CEO said he couldn't support Sanders' threshold of 50 per cent, he nonetheless wanted to work with him to advocate for the general idea, according to people with knowledge of the conversation.

The nearly hourlong meeting in Sanders' Senate office this week, held at Altman's request, highlighted the inherent tension between AI powerhouses and policymakers as Americans are increasingly asked to accept the costs of the AI boom even as they remain unconvinced of its direct benefits. Yet it's also creating odd political bedfellows fuelled by populism as politicians from Sanders to President Donald Trump embrace giving the public a stake in AI's growth.

Speaking to reporters on Air Force One on Friday, Trump described a potential partnership "where the American people can benefit from the success of AI" and said executives from leading AI companies will visit the White House, "probably next week," to discuss the idea.

"There's something very interesting about it, where it almost becomes a partnership with the American public," Trump, a Republican, said Friday.

When reporters noted to Trump that Sanders, a self-proclaimed democratic socialist, had proposed public ownership in AI companies, he pointed to similarities in their coalitions. The economic views of Trump voters and voters who supported Sanders for president, Trump said, "aren't that far apart."

Trump has embraced government investment in private companies in his second term, scrambling his party's politics.

His administration last year secured a 10 per cent stake in the struggling Silicon Valley company Intel, and it considered a government takeover of Spirit Airlines earlier this year, although the airline couldn't reach a deal and ultimately closed.

PUBLIC BACKLASH IS HARDER TO IGNORE

The positioning of leading figures such as Trump and Sanders comes as concerns about AI are emerging far beyond Washington.

In Michigan, Democrats recently clashed over Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's appearance with Altman at the site of a major data centre. Candidates such as New York Democratic House hopeful Alex Bores have also made AI regulation a campaign issue by tapping into voters' angst about the technology.

Data centre projects in the US have drawn opposition from residents concerned about electricity demand, water consumption and environmental impacts. Some states once eager to attract the facilities, including Ohio and Virginia, have moved to reconsider tax incentives.

"We need to pass legislation right now that says there's not going to be any further data centre development until they agree to pay for their own electricity, build their own grids and pay for their own water supply," Missouri Sen. Josh Hawley, a leading Republican skeptic of Big Tech, told The Associated Press.

Before arriving in Washington, Altman stopped in Michigan on Monday to appear alongside Whitmer, a Democrat, at the building site of a 1.65 million-square-foot data centre. Whitmer's team claimed the project will create more than 2,500 union construction jobs.

But it also drew criticism from local activists and some Democrats, including Michigan Rep. Rashida Tlaib, who called the project "disgusting." She said she was "so disappointed" in Whitmer.

The tensions extend beyond data centres. On college campuses, commencement speakers have been interrupted by boos when discussing artificial intelligence. About 70 per cent of college students see AI as a threat to their job prospects, according to a 2025 poll by the Institute of Politics at the Harvard Kennedy School.

SEARCH FOR AI BARGAIN

Sanders' team emphasized that the two did not reach an agreement on the main points that the senator made to Altman, including the 50 per cent figure so the public has decision-making power. Sanders also expressed opposition to the growing election spending by the AI industry.

POLICYMAKERS LOOK AT HOW AI SHOULD BE GOVERNED

Congress this week released a bipartisan framework that would establish the first broad federal approach to AI regulation while temporarily preempting many state laws.

Anthropic, one of OpenAI's top competitors, has proposed mechanisms for coordinating pauses on advanced AI development if systems become too powerful.

The Trump administration has also begun constructing its own oversight structure, signing an executive order to establish a process for reviewing national security risks posed by advanced AI systems before their public release.

Sanders said he found the administration's move notable after years of warnings that regulation could slow American innovation. —*PTI*

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman to Senetor Bernie Sanders recently met to discuss the matter, Potus Trump too is open to public ownership in AI – *AI*

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Women say they were raped by fighters in Sudan's ongoing war

The United Nations calls sexual violence one of the 'most defining features' of Sudan's war, now in its fourth year –*UNFPA*

Naked, hungry, raped and lying in her own urine, the woman said her captors after two days of misery handed her a phone. Call your friends and family, they said. Tell them to buy your freedom or you'll be killed.

The 38-year-old said she screamed on the calls as horrified loved ones listened to her being tortured in a remote village in western Sudan.

Now safely in the capital, Khartoum, she looked through photos she took of her battered face and body after being freed in September. She wants them to serve as evidence to hold the attackers accountable.

"I thought about seeking justice one day," she told The Associated Press. The AP does not identify people who say they have been sexually assaulted.

The United Nations calls sexual violence one of the "most defining features" of Sudan's war, now in its fourth year. It says sexual assaults have soared since the war began but it did not have data on assaults by combatants.

The UN says many women have been subject to sexual slavery and forced to pay ransoms for their release, sometimes up to USD 10,000.

The AP met three women who said they were abducted, held as sex slaves and forced to buy their freedom. They were introduced by aid workers who said they were aware of what had happened. The AP could not verify the accounts by the women who spoke out in a country where discussing sexual assault remains deeply taboo.

All three blamed the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces that are battling Sudan's military. The UN and rights groups have accused all parties of sexual assault, including allied armed groups, but they say the majority of the violence has been committed by the RSF, particularly in the Khartoum area, Darfur and Gezira state. The UN says South Kordofan has also become a hot spot as the war expands there.

The RSF did not respond to questions about abductions or assaults.

Captors demanded USD 1,500 for her freedom

The 38-year-old woman said she fled her home in el-Fasher in September, weeks before the besieged city in Darfur was captured by the RSF, an assault the UN said bore "hallmarks of genocide". Her husband, a soldier, had been killed. Her brother had been shot and badly wounded and needed care.

RSF fighters ambushed them on the road, she said. They separated out the women and children and searched the men for shoulder marks indicating they had carried a gun, a sign they likely were soldiers. Everyone was forced to strip, she said.

When the RSF tried to kill her brother, she told them to take her instead.

She said she was bound, beaten and thrown into a truck with four other women and teenage girls and driven to an abandoned village in the desert. Naked and hungry, they lay bound in a shelter, urinating on themselves.

For the next two days, she said she and the others were raped multiple times by different men. "I was thinking about ending my life," the woman said, wiping away tears.

On the second day, the men demanded about $1,500 for her freedom. She said they gave her a phone and told her to empty her bank account. She transferred everything, about $200. They made her open Facebook and reach out to contacts. She called her cousin. But once he paid, she said, the fighters called him back and pressed a metal object on her fingernails while she screamed in pain, so he'd send more.

She said the torture, including sexual assault, went on for hours during calls. Her captors finally accepted about $700 for her release.

She still wonders about the women unable to pay.

They remain captive and eventually disappear, said Hala Alkarib, regional director of the Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa, a grassroots feminist network.

Ransom cases have risen

The RSF has long held men and women for ransom but it has become more prevalent during the war, Sudan experts say.

Incidents of ransom, including for a small number involving sexual assault, have jumped by nearly 195 per cent from the beginning of the war until May, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, a US-based nonprofit. It said the majority of perpetrators are RSF fighters. Ransoms will increase as the paramilitary force fragments following high-level defections, said Mohamed Younis, a Sudanese conflict analyst. Another of the three women said that even when ransom money was collected, she wasn't freed.

After a relative in the United States transferred about $1,250, the 30-year-old said, the captors still didn't want to release her. In what she described as compassion, one smuggled her out of the compound at night and left her to find her way home.

She said she had been abducted from a market in Khartoum in 2024 when the RSF controlled the city. She was kept in a hut with other women for two weeks and forced to cook and clean, tend to cattle and sometimes bathe the fighters.

Each night she and the others were raped, she said: "They never missed a day ... I have nightmares."

The third woman said she had been abducted outside Dilling in South Kordofan, held for nine days in a compound, raped once and beaten. Her family paid for her release in September. —PTI

— FB

Democrat Xavier Becerra qualifies for California guv

SACRAMENTO, 6 JUNE

Democrat Xavier Becerra has advanced to the Californian governor's final election, emphasising his extensive 35-year career in public service, including roles as state attorney general and US health secretary. He claimed he's the most qualified candidate, stating, "I am ready to lead the fight to uphold California's promise." Once an outsider, Becerra gained momentum in the last months, promising to oppose President Trump, citing over 120 legal actions against his administration. He also pledged to declare states of emergency over energy and housing issues and freeze home insurance rates. If elected, he would become the first Latino governor since the late 1800s, breaking California's tradition of white male leadership. —*PTI*

3 Ahmadi Muslims men critical after shooting in Pak

LAHORE, 6 JUNE

Three young men of the Ahmadi community were critically injured when an unidentified gunman opened fire at Bait-ul-Aqsa, Rabwah, Pakistan's Ahmadiyya headquarters, late Friday. The attacker, on a motorcycle, fired indiscriminately at worshippers. A case has been registered against the assailant. Although the Ahmadi community regard themselves as Muslims, Pakistan's 1974 Parliament declared them non-Muslims, barring them from practising Islam or displaying Islamic symbols. Ahmadi spokesperson Amir Mahmood condemned the attack, stating this is the second incident in recent months. In October 2025, six from the Ahmadi community were injured outside another worship site. He accused authorities of inciting violence through hate speech, propaganda, and fatwas. The Minority Rights Group highlights systemic discrimination faced by religious minorities in Pakistan. —*PTI*

Nepal PM calls for BIMSTEC nations to boost cooperation

KATHMANDU, 6 JUNE

Nepal Prime Minister Balendra Shah has called for stronger cooperation among BIMSTEC member states to create economic opportunities and combat climate change and natural disasters. In a statement marking BIMSTEC's 29th anniversary, he emphasised the need to improve connectivity in transport, trade, and digital networks for deeper regional integration. The organisation's strength, he said, lies in its people, and build resilience. BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) is a regional multilateral organisation comprising seven South Asian and Southeast Asian nations dependent on the Bay of Bengal.—*PTI*

PANDA DIPLOMACY

The Taipei Zoo in Taiwan received a pair of endangered red pandas from China on Saturday, the first exchange of animals in more than a decade even as tensions between the two sides run high —*PTI*

Lebanon is not a bargaining chip: Iran

Israeli strikes kill 9 in Lebanon; Iran fumes at Lebanese Prez

Three Lebanese soldiers were killed in a strike on a vehicle; A Lebanese army soldier removes the rubble of a house that was destroyed in the recent clashes between Hezbollah fighters and Israeli troops in Dibbine village, southeast Lebanon —*X @LEBARMYOFFICIAL/PTI*

TEHRAN/ BEIRUT, 6 JUNE

In what is becoming a diplomatic spat, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi rejected Lebanese President Joseph Aoun's claims that Tehran was using Beirut as a "bargaining chip" in negotiations with the US. Araghchi's comments on Saturday came as Israel continued bombarding Lebanon, killing nine people, including three Lebanese soldiers.

Aoun had told CNN that Iran was "interfering" in Lebanon and directly told the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) directly, declaring, "It's not your country, it's our country". He asked if Tehran was truly seeking to end the war. Iran has been demanding that any deal with the US must include Lebanon, while warning that if Israel began attacking Beirut, a "full scale" war would resume.

Aoun also called for the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants, who again rejected the recent Lebanon-Israel ceasefire to come to the negotiating table and disarm.

"Based on Aoun's comments, one would think it's Iran that has occupied a fifth of Lebanon, displaced a quarter of Lebanese and is bombing his country on daily basis," Araghchi posted on X. "Had Lebanon been bargaining chip for Iran, we'd have a deal long ago. Save Lebanon from your real foe, President."

Israeli troops have seized around a fifth of Lebanon, pushing further into the country's south than at any time since the end of Israel's 1982-2000 occupation, with killing at least 3,000 people.

Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei echoed the charge.

"He sells the one standing next to him and buys the one standing against him. He leaves the one who supported him and follows the one who choked him," Baghaei stated on X.

Meanwhile, days after Lebanon and Israel reached a new ceasefire deal, Tel Aviv bombed the road linking the city of Nabatiyeh with the town of Marjayoun in southern Lebanon, killing a brigadier general, a captain and another soldier, the Lebanese army said without immediately releasing their names.

Another airstrike on the southern village of Saksakiyah killed six people and wounded four, state-run National News Agency said.

"The continued, deliberate, and repeated Israeli aggression against Lebanon, its people and its army only strengthens our resolve, faith and determination," the army said in its statement.

Israel's ground invasion of Lebanon and wide attacks that have displaced more than 1 million people. —*AGENCIES*

Iran seeks $24B frozen assets for deal

TEHRAN, 6 JUNE

A senior Iranian official claimed that Tehran has secured its "first" military victory, and demanded the release of USD 24 billion worth of frozen Iranian assets in any potential deal.

"This is the first time Iran has emerged victorious in wars, while in previous wars Iran has always been defeated," Mohsen Rezaei, a military adviser to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, told CNN.

"The negotiations are at a deadlock and Trump must break this deadlock," Rezaei added. "The ball is in Trump's court. If he (Trump) wants to reach an agreement with Iran, this $24 billion is a test of trust that Iran wants to have with Trump. This is our own money, not America's money."

Rezaei said that the possibility of war is low, but if it did occur again, it would spread from the Strait of Hormuz to the Indian Ocean, the Bab al-Mandab Strait, the Red Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea. —*ANI*

Israel kills Palestinian infant in West Bank

CAIRO, 6 JUNE

Israeli troops killed a seven-month-old Palestinian baby boy after firing at his parents' vehicle in the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian health ministry said.

Sam Fahd Abu Haikal was killed Friday evening, and his parents were wounded while driving in the Tel Rumeida area south of Hebron City.

The official Palestinian news agency WAFA said the infant was critically wounded after being struck in the jaw by the same bullet that injured his mother. He later died of his injuries.

His father, Fahd Abdul Aziz Abu Haikal, a lecturer at Bethlehem University, was shot in the hand. They were travelling from Bethlehem to visit family in Hebron when soldiers opened fire.

Israel's military said that soldiers shot at a vehicle that was accelerating toward them but later found out that the injured were uninvolved civilians. —*PTI*

Trump tells military to accelerate AI adoption

WASHINGTON, 6 JUNE

US President Donald Trump has issued a memorandum directing the military and national security agencies to accelerate the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) while maintaining safeguards for civil liberties and oversight of autonomous weapons systems.

In a memorandum addressed to senior administration officials, including the secretaries of defence and homeland security, Trump calls for updated Pentagon directive on autonomous weapons to reflect AI's rapidly evolving capabilities and ensure systems continue to respect military chains of command.

It directs the Defence Department "to ensure the deliberate adoption of AI systems that respect the chain of command and operational authorities."

It also bars the use of AI to censor free speech, embed ideological bias or conduct unlawful surveillance of American citizens.

The memo also comes amid concerns about the use of AI in military conflicts in Iran, Venezuela, Lebanon and Gaza.

The issue recently sparked a dispute between the Pentagon and AI company Anthropic. The company sought contractual assurances that its technology would not be used in fully autonomous weapons or for surveillance of Americans. Anthropic later sued after the Trump administration. —*PTI*

US bill seeks to end H1B route to permanent residency

WASHINGTON, 6 JUNE

A Republican lawmaker has introduced legislation in the US Congress seeking major changes to the H1B visa programme, including ending its use as a pathway to permanent residency and scrapping the Optional Practical Training (OPT) programme for foreign students.

Congressman Chip Roy of Texas introduced the American White-Collar Worker Jobs Act on Thursday, arguing that the H1B system has allowed employers to replace American STEM workers with lower-paid foreign labour. The bill is backed by groups including US Tech Workers and the Federation for American Immigration Reform

The proposed legislation would require H1B holders to maintain a residence abroad and abandon the current "dual intent" policy that allows visa holders to pursue green cards while working in the US. It also seeks to reduce maximum H1B validity period from six years to two years. —*PTI*

ON SIKH'S TEENS KILLING

Don't interfere in our democracy: Starmer to Vance

LONDON, 6 JUNE

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer's office has condemned comments by US Vice President JD Vance, who blamed immigration for the death of a university student who was handcuffed as he lay dying from a stab.

Henry Nowak was fatally stabbed in December by 23-year-old Vickrum Digwa. Digwa initially claimed he had been the victim of a racist attack, leading police to briefly treat the wounded Nowak as a suspect before realising he was the victim. Digwa was convicted of murder and sentenced this week to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 21 years.

The case has fuelled protests and anti-immigration rhetoric, including from Reform's Nigel Farrage, despite both Nowak and Digwa being British citizens. A demonstration in Southampton this week turned violent, with police officers attacked using chairs, cans, rocks and flares.

US Vice President JD Vance and Sikh teen Vikram Singh Digwa —*x*

Vance said in a post on X on Friday that there should be "righteous anger", and blamed the murder on "the mass invasion of migrants, many of whom who despise the West and the people who love it."

Starmer's office responded to "trying to interfere in our democracy and seeking to stir up division on our streets."

Noting that Nowak's family said they don't want the issue to create further division, Downing Street added: "Our politics should bring people together even in the most terrible of circumstances. That is who we are." — *PTI*

Kim showcases new warship ahead of Xi's visit to North Korea

SEOL, 6 JUNE

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspected sea trials of the repaired 5,000-ton destroyer Kang Kon, signalling plans to expand his nuclear navy. State media reported Kim visited the vessel on Thursday during capability tests, accompanied by his teenage daughter, believed to be Kim Ju Ae.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and his daughter observe the sea trials of destroyer Kang Kon—*PTI*

Kim emphasised the need to "rapidly develop" naval forces capable of delivering a "deadly blow at the enemy any moment under the water or on the water". He highlighted the navy's role in a new five-year defence plan, including larger 10,000-ton destroyers and "underwater secret weapons".

. Kim's push for nuclear expansion follows recent unveiling of a new uranium-enrichment facility, with Kim pledging to increase nuclear forces "at an exponential rate".

The visit by China's Xi Jinping is set for Monday. —*PTI*

LIKELY FROM CHINA

Singapore blocks social media posts attacking Indians

SINGAPORE, 6 JUNE

Singapore has ordered social media platforms YouTube, Facebook and X to block access to 14 posts that allegedly targeted the Indian community and threatened the country's multicultural harmony.

The Ministry of Home Affairs said police issued disabling directions under the Online Criminal Harms Act, requiring the platforms to prevent Singapore users from accessing the content. Investigations found the posts most likely originated from a China-based platform before being shared more widely.

Second Home Affairs Minister Edwin Tong said authorities believe the content was created overseas and sought to divide Singaporeans along racial lines. He stressed that every community in Singapore is valued and enjoys an equal place in society. About 75 per cent of Singapore's population is of Chinese descent, while Malays and Indians make up significant minority communities. — *PTI*

50 die of thirst in Sahara after lorry breaks down

NIAMEY, 6 JUNE

At least 49 people have died of thirst in a remote part of the Sahara in northern Niger after their truck broke down, authorities say. The group, returning from Mali where they attended Eid al-Adha celebrations, was stranded more than 80km west of Assamaka, a key border crossing between Niger and Algeria.

"The travellers found themselves trapped in a hostile environment where extreme temperatures and lack of supply points make survival extremely difficult," said the governor of Agadez. Only two survived, trekking to Assamaka.

Chehuo Azizou, of a local NGO, told the BBC, "This recent incident is not unusual. Such cases often occur on routes to Libya or Algeria."

The Malian lorry had departed from Telhandek but veered from its route. Despite repeated repair attempts, most perished, deprived of water.

Dozens of bodies were found around the truck. The victims, all Niger nationals, were buried in mass graves —*Agencies*

Ukraine strikes St Petersburg after Putin rejects direct talks

ST PETERSBURG, 6 JUNE

Ukraine targeted Russia's second-largest city St Petersburg again on Saturday morning after Russian President Vladimir Putin rejected Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's offer for direct talks.

Residents of St Petersburg, Russia's former capital, were told not to leave their homes by Governor Alexander Beglov, who also warned of disruptions to internet.

Regional Gov Alexander Drozdenko said 141 drones were shot down over the surrounding Leningrad region. Russia's Defence Ministry said its air defences shot down 376 Ukrainian drones.

Although no casualties were immediately reported, the renewed attack on St Petersburg, indicate a shift in the four-year war.

Zelenskyy said in a statement that the drones travelled nearly 1,000km to strike Russia's navy arsenal and an oil depot. Ukraine had hit the city on Wednesday, hours before the opening of the St Petersburg International Economic Forum, Putin's annual showcase for investment.

Putin had said he saw no point in meeting with Zelenskyy, who issued his first public message to the Russian leader.

With the front line barely moving as swarms of drones hinder advances, both sides have sought an edge by launching long-range strikes.

Meanwhile, in Ukraine, one person was killed and three wounded overnight in the Dnipropetrovsk region. —*PTI*

The aftermath of a drone strike on St Petersburgh, Saturday —*SCREENGRAB@ZELENSKYYUA*

RBI reforms could pull $40-75B foreign capital

Rupee rose by 50 paise and is likely to push it to INR 92-93

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

The Reserve Bank of India's post-monetary policy committee announcements are aimed at shifting the rupee narrative from depreciation risk to inflows, SBI Research and Kotak Securities said in their respective research reports.

The MPC unanimously held the repo rate at 5.25 per cent and retained a neutral stance. RBI cut FY27 real GDP growth by 30 bps to 6.6 per cent, citing weak global demand, supply chain disruptions, and El Nino risks; Q3 growth was lowered by 50 bps to 6.5 per cent. CPI inflation for FY27 was revised up 50 bps to 5.1 per cent, with Q3 at 5.9 per cent and Q4 at 5.4 per cent. Core CPI rose 30 bps to 4.7 per cent.

SBI notes the policy language has shifted toward "inflation vigilance and external sector defense" while signalling calm to avoid speculative attacks on the rupee. RBI pushed back on calls for the rupee to weaken toward 100, emphasising that its moves are sometimes out of sync with fundamentals.

Markets reacted immediately to RBIs policy changes as RBI policy shifted to "inflation vigilance" —*PTI*

The forward-looking impact stems from a slew of capital-flow reforms. RBI expanded the Fully Accessible Route to include new 15-, 30- and 40-year G-secs and removed the 30 per cent short-maturity limit.

With Rs 1.5 lakh crore of the new tenors yet to be issued and Rs 4.06 lakh crore headroom under the general route, SBI expects stronger FPI demand, lower long-end yields, lower government borrowing costs, and better liquidity. Government tax exemption on interest and capital gains for FPIs adds post-tax returns of Rs 4,000-5,000 crore plus Rs 500-1,000 crore, strengthening India's case for global bond index inclusion.

Kotak flagged liberalisation of equity investment limits for NRIs, OCIs, and all PROIs without SEBI registration, noting this gives a breather to domestic capital markets and improves visibility for India Inc overseas. RBI also restored the export proceeds realisation window to 9 months from 15 months, bringing in forex faster.

Markets reacted immediately, with the rupee appreciating 50 paise, 10-40 year G-sec yields falling 4-5 bps, 2-3 year corporate bond yields down 20-25 bps, and the OIS curve declining 10-15 bps. —*ANI*

PROJECT GLASSWING

Govt agencies, pvt firms get Anthropic's Mythos AI

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Government agencies and private firms are among a select group of Indian organisations that have gained access to Anthropic's Mythos artificial intelligence model, as part of the recent expansion of Project Glasswing, according to sources familiar with the matter.

Sources said the number of Indian entities with access is currently in the single digits.

An email sent to Anthropic did not receive an immediate reply. The participating Indian organisations include both government and private sectors, but specific names were not disclosed.

Project Glasswing is described as a "collaborative effort to secure the world's most important software". It aims to strengthen cybersecurity by providing select organisations access to Claude Mythos Preview, a sophisticated AI capable of identifying software vulnerabilities.

When announced globally in April, about 50 partners initially gained access, and Anthropic reported they had uncovered more than 10,000 high- or critical-severity security flaws across various codebases.

Earlier this week, Anthropic announced a major expansion of Project Glasswing, widening its scope to around 150 organisations in over 15 countries.

The new cohort includes operators of critical infrastructure in sectors such as power, water, healthcare, communications, and hardware. "Many of the new partners are vendors - companies or non-profits maintaining codebases relied upon by many organisations worldwide, including governments," the company said on 2 June.

Anthropic explained that partner organisations are those for which a successful cyberattack could have far-reaching consequences, potentially impacting over 100 million people. The access is designed to help organisations detect security vulnerabilities, test defences, and accelerate the patching of vulnerable software.

The company's latest blog urged leading AI labs to consider moderating AI development speed, warning that increasingly capable systems could soon accelerate their own progress beyond human oversight, creating societal risks.

"We believe it would be good for the world to have the option to slow or temporarily pause frontier AI development to enable societal structures and alignment research to keep up with the advance of the technology," it stated. —*PTI*

Netflix names Jay Hoag as board chair, succeeding Reed Hastings

NEW YORK, 6 JUNE

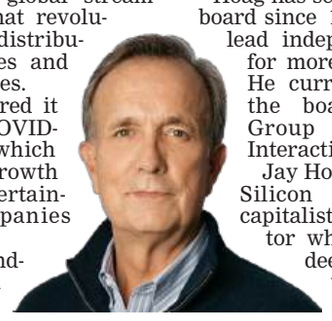
Netflix appointed lead independent director **Jay Hoag** as the chairman of its board, succeeding Reed Hastings, who stepped down from the board of the company he co-founded nearly three decades ago.

The streaming platform announced the move in an SEC filing on Friday, saying Hoag assumed the role after its annual shareholders meeting on 4 June.

Netflix said in April that Hastings is quitting the company in order to focus on his philanthropy.

Hastings transformed Netflix from a DVDs-by-mail business to a global streaming goliath that revolutionized the distribution of movies and television series.

He also steered it through the COVID-19 pandemic, which boosted its growth as other entertainment companies struggled.



Hoag co-founded TCV, a growth equity firm, which has been an investor in Netflix for many years.

Hoag has served on Netflix's board since 1999 and was the lead independent director for more than a decade. He currently serves on the boards of Zillow Group and Peloton Interactive.

Jay Hoag is a legendary Silicon Valley venture capitalist and tech investor who has a history deeply intertwined with Netflix. —*Agencies*

Andaman gas find ups exploration chances

SRI VIJAYA PURAM, 6 JUNE

State-owned Oil India Ltd (OIL) has announced its second natural gas discovery in the Andaman offshore region, boosting hopes that the frontier basin could become a significant hydrocarbon producer in the future.

The latest discovery was made at the Vijayapuram-3 exploratory well, located roughly 15km off the east coast of the Andaman Islands in water depths of 355m, according to Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri.

This marks the second successful gas-bearing well drilled by OIL in the block, following Vijayapuram-2 in September 2025.

OIL discovered gas at Vijayapuram-3 —*SCREENGRAB*

Of the three wells drilled so far under the company's ongoing exploration campaign, two have confirmed hydrocarbon presence, significantly improving the basin's outlook, OIL stated. Puri described this as a positive development in India's efforts to strengthen domestic energy security through offshore exploration.

He said, "Initial production testing of the well at a depth of 1900 plus metres in the Eocene formation has established the presence of natural gas through continuous flaring."

Puri also mentioned the Samudra Manthan Mission, announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Independence Day 2025, which plans to explore deepwater and ultra-deepwater wells to fully exploit hydrocarbon reserves. Following perforation, the well recorded a rapid pressure build-up and began production, indicating promising reservoir characteristics.

Industry observers believe these discoveries could lead to intensified exploration activities in the underexplored Andaman Basin, unlocking its hydrocarbon potential.

Oil India added that the latest discovery signals to a functioning petroleum system, with further appraisal activities underway. This includes seismic data reprocessing as well as additional 3D seismic surveys. —*PTI*

—FREEPIK

Govt sets standard packaging sizes for edible oils

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

The Department of Consumer Affairs has mandated standard pack sizes for edible oils under the Legal Metrology framework, to aid consumers in comparing prices. The department has amended its Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) for net quantity and pack sizes, giving manufacturers, packers, and importers a three-month transition period. Nine standard sizes—200ml/g, 500ml/g, 1 litre/kg, 2 litre/kg, 3 litre/kg, 4 litre/kg, 5 litre/kg, 15 litre/kg, and 20 litre/kg—cover major edible oils, including palm, soybean, sunflower, and others. The move follows consultations with industry bodies. Packages below 200ml or grams are exempted to maintain affordable small packs. Sudhakar Desai of IVPA welcomed the move, saying it will restore market sanity and reduce confusion. —*PTI*

Two dead in Amazon warehouse fire in Haldwani

HALDWANI, 6 JUNE

Two employees died after a large fire erupted at an Amazon warehouse in Uttarakhand's Haldwani, police confirmed on Saturday. Superintendent of Police (City) Manoj Katyal stated that after extinguishing the blaze, bodies of Narendra Prasad, 35, from Bagjala, and Amit Arya, 25, from Rampur Road, were found inside the warehouse opposite Sheetal Hotel. Katyal said police, fire services, and officials responded swiftly after receiving information late Friday night. The fire spread rapidly and was only controlled after significant effort. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem, with the cause of the fire still under investigation, the police added. The incident is being thoroughly examined. —*PTI*

PM meets Economic Advisory Council discuss growth strategy

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday held discussions with the members of the Economic Advisory Council (EAC) on strategies to better India's economic growth amidst global instability.

The EAC members also provided their assessment of the impact of the West Asia conflict on India and the world. "Chaired a meeting of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister.

Deliberated on a wide range of issues relating to India's economic transformation and long-term development priorities. Also shared perspectives on adding more momentum to the reforms journey and ensuring 'Ease of Living' as well as 'Ease of Doing Business'," PM Modi said on 'X'.

The high-level meeting focused on ideas and measures to strengthen India's economy during turbulent global times, with discussions on reforms to improve living standards and business conditions. The EAC, an independent body advising the government on economic issues, comprises the chairman, three full-time members, and 11 part-time members.

Presently, S Mahendra Dev chairs the body, with full-time members Sanjay Kumar Mishra, Sanjeev Sanyal, and Shamika Ravi. The part-time members include Rakesh Mohan, Sajjid Z. Chinoy, Neelkanth Mishra, Nilesh Shah, TT Ram Mohan, Soumya Kanti Ghosh, KV Raju, Chetan Ghate, Pami Dua, Pulak Ghosh, and Gaurav Vallabh.

The EAC's terms include analysing issues referred by the Prime Minister, advising on macroeconomic matters, and addressing any other tasks as directed. —*PTI*

Business lobbying eases US green card policy: Report

WASHINGTON, 6 JUNE

Intense lobbying by American business leaders, including those from the technology and artificial intelligence sectors, has led to a more lenient stance on the US government's new green card policy, The Washington Post reported.

Following the rollout of a policy by US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) requiring individuals working in the US to return to their home countries to apply for permanent residency.

Multiple private discussions The report said phone calls and emails took place between major companies, industry groups, CEOs, and officials from the White House.

The US Chamber of Commerce and the tech industry warned that the policy could harm their workforce. In response, the administration softened its messaging.

USCIS clarified that most immigrants seeking permanent residency would not need to leave the country, though formal guidance is pending. Jennie Murray, president of the National Immigration Forum, said, "We are glad to know that the administration is listening willing to work with the American business community." —*PTI*

SpaceX amends IPO with $920M/month Google deal

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

SpaceX updated its IPO prospectus on 1 June and again on 3 June, adding two items: a new cloud contract with Google and a 5 per cent "friends and family" share allocation.

According to Amendment No. 2 filed on June 3, SpaceX entered a Cloud Service Agreement with Google LLC on 5 June 2026, to supply roughly 110,000 NVIDIA GPUs plus CPUs, memory and related components. Google will pay $920 million per month from October 2026 through June 2029, worth about $29.4 billion over the term. Capacity ramps up through September at a reduced fee. The deal includes strict delivery terms. If SpaceX fails to provide the GPUs by 30 Sept 2026, Google can terminate after a one-month grace period or take fewer GPUs at a lower price. After 31 Dec 2026, either side can exit with 90 days' notice. Google keeps ownership of its AI models and data.

The amendment also confirms new terms for IPO allocations. SpaceX will reserve 5 per cent of the offering for " which may include parties with whom we have business relationships and friends and families of our executive officers." —*ANI*

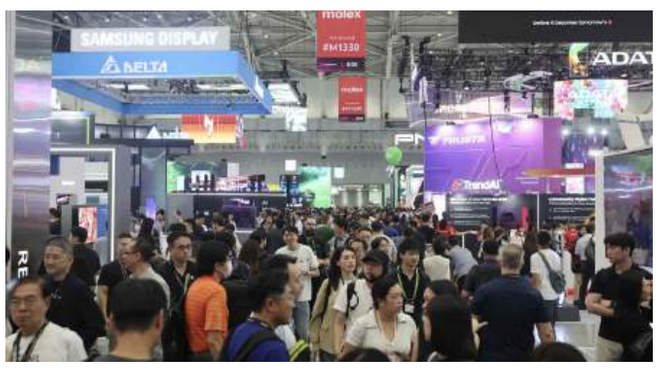
Indian tech firms showcase products at Taipei trade event

TAIPEI, 6 JUNE

Indian electronics manufacturer Sahasra and software firm Zoho presented their products at COMPUTEX 2026, a major global technology trade exhibition in Taipei, aiming to attract international customers and forge new partnerships.

While the event saw strong participation from Indian buyers, a few Indian companies, including Sahasra Electronics, part of the Sahasra Group, showcased their offerings.

Sahasra displayed microSD cards and reported positive responses from customers



across China, the US, Europe, and the UK. Ankur Dwivedi, strategic account manager at Sahasra, said, "We are meeting customers here, and we are getting very, very good responses." The company also sought to explore collaborations and joint ventures, with Dwivedi stating, "We are here to explore partnerships in terms of customers and technology, innovation and joint ventures."

- COMPUTEX 2026, a major global technology trade exhibition in Taipei saw strong participation from Indian buyers, a few Indian companies, including Sahasra Electronics, part of the Sahasra Group, showcased their offerings.

Zoho, which offers cloud-based business software, noted Taiwan's growing importance as a market. Goh Eng Kit, Zoho's regional lead, said, "Taiwan is emerging as a key market, with many businesses engaging with our products."

Organisers expressed hope for increased Indian participation in future editions, as India-Taiwan technology ties expand into semiconductors, AI, and electronics supply chains. —*PTI*

THE RIGHT LOCATION WINS

India data centre capacity to hit 8GW by 2030: Bernstein

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Bernstein expects India's data centre capacity to surge to the higher end of 5-8GW by 2030 from 1.5GW today, driven by West Asian capacity constraints pushing demand here.

The biggest "right to win" won't be computer hardware but access to land and substation power in the right locations. Navi Mumbai is already seeing a fight for land at prices higher than last transactions, and players with locked thermal equipment, grid connectivity and large land banks will dominate.

Bernstein's industry checks show DC capex in India, ex-compute, is Rs 50 Cr/MW, lower than the US. Colocation landlords that build and lease infrastructure to hyperscalers/enterprises who bring their own GPUs. Payback is 5 years and capex is $8-15Mn per MW. Neoclouds/GPU hosts that own the GPUs and offer rentals of fully built clusters. They generate 8-10x higher revenue per IT MW than

colocation but need ~$45Mn capex, face shorter contracts and tech obsolescence risk.

Bernstein expects Indian players to predominantly adopt the colocation model, letting hyperscalers take GPU balance-sheet risk.

Bernstein notes PJM and ERCOT became data center hubs due to deregulated power markets, cheap land and faster interconnection. US wait times for interconnect now average 6 years, making dispatchable capacity critical. In the US, utilities with gas and nuclear in PJM/ERCOT like Vistra, Constellation and NRG surged 4-8x in 4 years as PJM capacity prices jumped from $29/MW-day to $329/MW-day. Premiums went to clean dispatchable power and behind-the-meter co-location.

For India, Bernstein says Adani Group's dominance is "unmatched" given it's the largest renewable, private thermal and transmission player, with large land parcels and grid connectivity. Reliance Industries also holds 0.5 Mn acres in Gujarat and 5K acres in Navi Mumbai. Even crypto miners with power off-take agreements are pivoting to DC colocation, underlining that electricity access trumps everything. —*PTI*

Rahul and Gill hit centuries as India dominate Day 1

Afghanistan was beaten on the opening day of one-off Test

MULLANPUR, 6 JUNE

KL Rahul's poise was matched by Shubman Gill's panache, producing contrasting centuries as India's formidable batting line-up posted 368 for three in their bid to out-bat Afghanistan on the opening day of the one-off Test, here Saturday.

Rahul (100 off 165 balls) showed the value of defence while skipper Gill (103 batting off 143 balls) was intent-personified on a day when India decided to give a batting masterclass in Tests to an Afghanistan attack that was high on spirit but low on skill quotient.

The manner in which Gill batted, it seemed like he was playing a practice game.The languid approach and the lazy elegance were on view as he held an already tired Afghan attack by the scruff of its neck, hitting 11 fours and a straight six.

In his 41st Test, the Indian skipper now has 11 centuries. The one who would rue missing out on a three-figure mark is Sai Sudharsan (81 off 104 balls), despite getting two reprieves, while Rishabh Pant was happy smashing three effortless sixes en route his unbeaten half-century off just 70 balls.

It is unlikely that India would bat more than a session and a half on the second day before declaration and unleashing their spin troika on Afghanistan.The pitch has something for the slow bowlers, and it will not be a surprise if it does not go the full distance.

For Afghanistan, Mohammad Saleem (2/67 in 13 overs) was their most successful one, but the standout fast bowler was Ziaur Rahman (1/61 in 15 overs), who troubled batters without much success.In fact, he could have Rahul early had keeper Afsar Zazai appealed for a caught behind, which the TV replays later confirmed.Once he got the lucky reprieve, Rahul was unflappable en route to his 12th Test hundred. There were cover drives and signature on-drives and a beautiful straight drive in his 11 boundaries.Rahul was more intent on playing within himself and allowed Sudharsan to attack during their 139-run second wicket stand after Yashasvi Jaiswal (24) gifted his wicket with an innocuous tickle down the leg-side during the first hour. For Afghanistan, the problem was their spin attack. With their top three world class spinners choosing to be gun for hire in T20 leagues across the world, the ones picked for this game -- left-arm spinner Kharote (0/95 in 20 overs) and off-spinner Abdul Malik (0/37 in 6 overs) simply didn't have the skills to stop the Indian batters.

They didn't go on a carnage but yet found ways to hit boundaries with alarming frequency, with 42 fours and 4 sixes hit on the day.

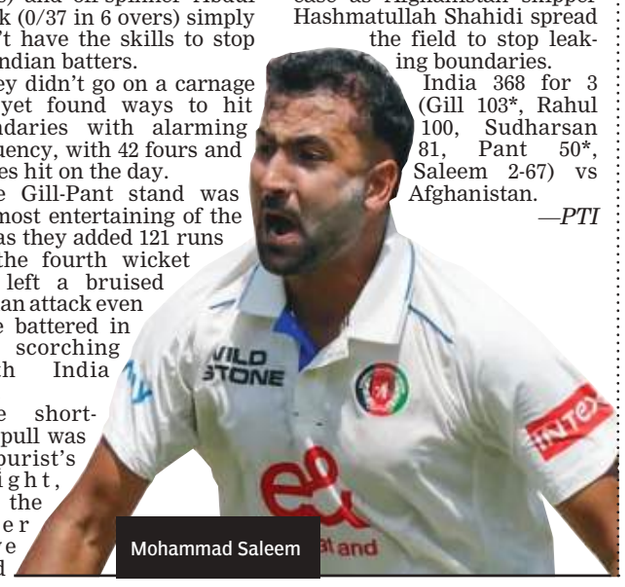
The Gill-Pant stand was the most entertaining of the day as they added 121 runs for the fourth wicket and left a bruised Afghan attack even more battered in the scorching North India heat.

The short-arm pull was a purist's delight, and the cover drive had class written all over it. He and Pant ran the singles with ease as Afghanistan skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi spread the field to stop leaking boundaries.

India 368 for 3 (Gill 103*, Rahul 100, Sudharsan 81, Pant 50*, Saleem 2-67) vs Afghanistan.

—PTI

India's captain Shubman Gill celebrates his century with Rishabh Pant, India's KL Rahul, after completing his century on day one of the Test cricket match between India and Afghanistan -PTI



Mohammad Saleem

FRENCH OPEN 2026 QUEEN

Andreeva wins first Grand Slam title at French Open

ROME, 6 JUNE

Mirra Andreeva defeated Maja Chwalinska in the French Open final in straight sets to clinch her maiden Grand Slam title on Saturday. The Russian beat her opponent 6-3, 6-2 in a match that lasted almost one and a half hours.

At 19, eighth-ranked Andreeva became the youngest player to win the women's singles title since Monica Seles was 18 when she landed her third straight French Open in 1992. Meanwhile, Chwalinska was attempting to become the first qualifier to capture the Roland Garros title.

Andreeva arrived at Saturday's showpiece as the overwhelming favourite after bulldozing her way through the draw, dropping only 12 games in her last three matches and looking every inch a future Grand Slam champion.

Andreeva, who reached the Roland Garros semi-finals as a 17-year-old two years ago, believes her growing maturity has helped transform her from a precocious talent into a genuine title contender.

Russia's Mirra Andreeva holds the trophy after winning the French Open against Poland's Maja Chwalinska -X/@FRENCHOPEN

Granollers, Zeballos retain French Open men's doubles title

Marcel Granollers and Horacio Zeballos successfully defended their French Open men's doubles title with a dominant 6-4, 6-2 win over Harri Heliovaara and Henry Patten on Saturday, claiming their third Grand Slam title as a pair.

Spaniard Granollers and Argentine Zeballos, who initially paired up in 2019, won the French Open and U.S. Open last year and justified their top seeding, having not dropped a set in their 2026 Roland Garros campaign.

Finland's Heliovaara was error-prone with his serve throughout the match as the second seeds, who have also won two Grand Slams together, struggled to keep up with their opponents' well-placed winners from close to the net.

A Heliovaara double fault handed the first break to the holders in the third game. Although the second seeds broke back to make it 3-3, Granollers hit two forehand winners to break in the next game, tilting the set back in the top seeds' favour.

Alexander Zverev plays Flavio Cobolli in the men's final on Sunday to conclude the wildest Grand Slam in recent memory. *—PTI*

Marcel Granollers and Horacio Zeballos successfully defended their French Open men's doubles titler-X/@FRENCHOPEN

-PTI

Women's U18 Asia Cup: India clinch bronze medal

KAKAMIGAHARA, 6 JUNE

The Indian hockey team won the bronze medal at the Women's U18 Asia Cup after registering a commanding 3-0 victory over Korea in the third-place match here on Saturday. Sandeepa Kumari (2'), captain Sweety Kujur (16') and Nousheen Naz (33') were on target as India capped off their campaign with a podium finish.

Determined to bounce back from their narrow shootout defeat against China in the semifinals, India made a dream start and took the lead within the opening two minutes.

Sandeepa Kumari (2') showcased excellent composure, producing a brilliant finish to give India the breakthrough and set the tone for the contest.

India continued to dominate possession and create opportunities in the attacking circle. Their persistence paid off in the 16th minute when Sweety Kujur found the back of the net with a field goal to double India's advantage heading into the second quarter.*—PTI*

World Boxing Cup: Minakshi and Deepak to lead India's charge

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

World No. 1 Minakshi and seasoned campaigner Deepak will spearhead India's challenge at the World Boxing Cup 2026 (Stage 2), scheduled to take place in Guiyang, China, from 15 to 21 June.

This is a second-string Indian team comprising boxers who finished as runners-up in the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games trials. India enters the tournament on the back of an impressive run in the previous World Cup cycle, where the team consistently secured multiple medals across stages and delivered a strong overall tally in the finals, underlining its growing stature on the global stage. The Boxing Federation of India (BFI) has named a well-rounded squad featuring a blend of established performers*—PTI*

Republic of Ireland's Kevin O'Toole (7) heads the ball into his own net on a corner kick by Canada's Liam Millar -X/@CANADAWC

Canada settles for 1-1 draw with Ireland

MONTREAL, 6 JUNE

Chiedozie Ogbene's goal pulled Ireland into a 1-1 draw with Canada in the Canadians' final tune-up before the World Cup.

Canada went up in the 24th minute on an own goal off Ireland defender Jake O'Brien, who was in front of the net on Stephen Eustáquio's corner kick.

Ireland was awarded a penalty in the second half after Cyle Larin's reckless challenge on Ireland's Jamie McGrath. Canada goalkeeper Maxime Crépeau punched away the attempt by Troy Parrott, but Ogbene slammed the rebound to tie it in the 60th minute. Larin, who started for Canada, signed a two-year deal with Southampton earlier in the day. Ireland, which did not qualify for this year's World Cup, nearly scored a go-ahead goal but Crépeau deftly stopped a charge by Mason Melia in the 85th minute. He finished with two saves.

Iran's World Cup team approved for visas

Members of Iran's World Cup soccer team have been granted visas to the United States, two U.S. officials said, clearing them to enter the United States from their training base in Tijuana, Mexico, ahead of their first two matches near Los Angeles this month.

The team's participation in the World Cup has been complicated by Iran's war with Israel and the United States.

FIFA to allow factory-sealed, disposable water bottles

FIFA announced that it will now allow fans to bring their own water bottles to some stadiums during the World Cup, adjusting a policy that had barred spectators from bringing refillable water bottles into the tournament's 16 stadiums across North America, including some with limited or no shade from the sun.

FIFA, in a social media post, said fans will be permitted to bring one soft, plastic, 20-ounce (590 millilitre), factory-sealed, disposable water bottle into any match taking place in the United States or Canada.

In a video released by FIFA, Chief Operating Officer Heimo Schirgi said fans will still not be permitted to bring in hard-sided, reusable water bottles "due to safety and security reasons." *—PTI*

SOORYAVANSHI INCLUDED

Bumrah, Hardik to be preserved for longer formats: Ajit Agarkar

MUMBAI, 6 JUNE

The national selection panel on Saturday did not include premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah and all-rounder Hardik Pandya in the squads to tour Ireland and England, in a strong indication that the wisemen are largely reserving their services for Tests and ODIs respectively in the coming season.

Bumrah will return to action during the Asian Games to be held from September 17 to October 3, but chief selector Ajit Agarkar made it clear that the pacer will be used more in longer formats.

At 15 years and 71 days old, Sooryavanshi becomes the youngest ever player to feature in an Indian cricket team, surpassing the long-standing record held by the great Sachin Tendulkar.

India will travel to Ireland for two T20Is (26 and 28 June), followed by a five-match T20I series against England between 1 and 11 July.

Shreyas has returned to the national T20 side for the first time after a match against Australia at Bengaluru on 3 December 2023.

Sooryavanshi's inclusion was a foregone conclusion after the 15-year-old bagged the Orange Cap in 2026, scoring 776 runs with a hundred and five fifties at a strike rate of 237.30.

India squad for Ireland and England T20 series: Shreyas Iyer (C), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson, Ishan Kishan, Shivam Dube, Tilak Varma (vc), Nitish Kumar Reddy, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Varun Chakravarthy, Ravi Bishnoi, Mohammad Siraj, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Prince Yadav, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi.

India squad for Asian Games: Shreyas Iyer (c), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson, Ishan Kishan, Shivam Dube, Tilak Varma (VC), Reddy, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Varun Chakravarthy, Ravi Bishnoi, Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah and Vaibhav Sooryavnshi. *—PTI*

SHAILI, WOMEN'S 4X100M QUARTET WIN GOLD IN TAIPEI OPEN

TAIPEI CITY, 6 JUNE

Long jumper Shaili Singh and the women's 4x100m relay team won a gold medal each, while Tejas Shirse bagged a silver in the 110m hurdles, as all the Indian athletes in the fray returned with a medal on the opening day of the New Taipei City Athletics Open here on Saturday.

Shaili was not at her best as she jumped 6.24m, but that was enough for her to take the top spot. She could go nowhere near her season's best of 6.58m, which she had recorded while winning silver at the Federation Cup last month. Her personal best remains 6.76m, set in 2023.

The Indian women's 4x100m relay quartet of SS Sneha, Srabani Nanda, Sudeshna Shivankar and Tamanna ran 44.07 seconds to win the gold and equal the meet record.

The last day of the meet is on Sunday. *—PTI*

DOPE OFFENDERS: AJITH, LALWANI AMONG 24 PROVISIONALLY SUSPENDED

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Cricketer Bhupen Lalwani, weightlifter Ajith Narayana, who had won two bronzes in the recent Asian Championships in Gandhinagar, and wrestler Sahil Jaglan, who took part in Asian Games trials a few days ago, were among several athletes handed provisional suspension by the NADA for failing dope tests.

Women's 1500m national record holder KM Deeksha was also handed a provisional suspension after her dope sample was found to contain Stanozolol, a steroid. Her dope flunk has already been reported by PTI, but the details of the nature of the prohibited substance, and whether she was handed suspension or not, were not known then. The National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) on Saturday issued a list of 24 athletes from various sports who have been handed provisional suspension as of 3 June. *—PTI*

NORWAY CHESS TITLE

I think this is the biggest win of my career: Praggnanandhaa

OSLO, 6 JUNE

Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa etched his name in the history books as he became the first Indian to win the prestigious Norway Chess title with a final-round victory over Germany's Vincent Keymer here, capping off a brilliant campaign in style.

Praggnanandhaa, who began the final round in second place with 15 points on Friday, delivered when it mattered the most, securing a classical win worth three full points to finish on 18 points and clinch one of the most coveted trophies in elite chess. In doing so, the 20-year-old Chennai player achieved a feat that had eluded even Indian chess legend Viswanathan Anand and reigning world champion D Gukesh, among others, since the tournament's inception in 2013.Competing in Norway Chess for only the second time, Praggnanandhaa endured a slow start in the elite six-player field before gathering momentum in the second half of the event to secure four wins on the trot.

His campaign was highlighted by a remarkable achievement defeating seven-time Norway Chess champion and World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen twice in classical chess a rare accomplishment that underlined his determination to bounce back from the disappointment of an underwhelming Candidates Tournament in Paphos earlier this year.

India's Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa has achieved a remarkable achievement -X/@CHESSMASTER

- Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa said the event's extraordinary strength, with one of the highest average ratings ever assembled in a tournament, added even greater weight to his victory

As reigning world champi-oThe result was made possible after American Grandmaster Wesley So, who led the standings with 15.5 points heading into the final round, was held to a draw in his classical game against Alireza Firouzja, sending their contest into an Armageddon tie-break.

Although Wesley So went on to win the Armageddon tie-break, the victory was worth only 1.5 points, taking his tally to 17 points one short of Praggnanandhaa's winning total of 18.

Praggnanandhaa described his Norway Chess triumph as the biggest achievement of his career, emphasising that defeating some of the world's strongest players including the great Magnus Carlsen made the title particularly memorable. He said the event's extraordinary strength, with one of the highest average ratings ever assembled in a tournament, added even greater weight to his victory. *—PTI*